THE HISTORY OF THE Roman Empreſſes.

VOL. I.

Roergas de Serviez (J.)

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THE

Roman Empreſſes:

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF THE

LIVES and Secret INTRIGUES

OF THE

WIVES

OF THE

Twelve CÆSARS;

Of thoſe of the other Roman EMPERORS, and of the Princeſſes of their Blood.

In which are introduced the moſt remarkable Tranſactions of the ROMAN HISTORY: Collected from ancient Authors Greek and Latin.

With HISTORICAL and CRITICAL NOTES.

Written originally in French, for the Inſtruction of his Royal Highneſs the DUKE DE CHARTRES.

By Monſieur DE SERVIEZ.

And Tranſlated by the

Hon. BYSSE MOLESWORTH.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BL

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN PONSONBY,

One of His Majeſty's Moſt Honourable Privy Council, and one of the Commiſſioners of the Revenue in Ireland.

SIR,

I Hope you will excuſe the liberty I have taken, in addreſſing to you the product of ſome leiſure hours.

On peruſing the book I found it entertaining and inſtructive, being matters of fact ſupported by the beſt authorities, collected into one body and reduced to a ſmall compaſs; which Monſieur de Serviez has done in a better manner,

than has been attempted by other tranſlators of the Roman hiſtorians, who have contented themſelves with mentioning (very ſlightly and ſuperficially) many circumſtances that required to be enlarged upon, and have been quite ſilent as to others, no leſs intereſting.

When I ſay the book is improving, I cannot be underſtood to mean that it will be ſo to you, who are well acquainted with all the polite learning. But I carefully avoid that nauſeous and fulſome panegyrick, ſo uſual upon theſe occaſions. It is true, that were I to go into particulars, I ſhould have one advantage that few dedicators have to boaſt of; I ſhould not fear being accuſed of flattery or falſhood. But I am not ignorant that thoſe who deſerve praiſe moſt deſire it leaſt, ſo I chuſe not to ſay any thing upon that ſubject.

Finding that no body who had more time and abilities than I, would be at the pains to dreſs up this little book in our own country garb, I thought it a pity the Engliſh reader ſhould be deprived of the pleaſure and profit it is capable

pable of affording, ſo have ventured to perform it myſelf (ſuch as it is) and hope the ſtile will not be too ſeverely criticized upon, as it coſt but little more trouble than the bare writing.

As to the tranſlation, I have adhered to the French as ſtrictly as poſſible, as far as the Idiom of the two Languages would admit of.

I am with the greateſt eſteem and reſpect,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient,

Humble Servant,

Byſſe Moleſworth.

THE

Roman Empreſſes.

WHILST the republick of Rome maintained her liberties, the Roman ladies were not diſtinguiſhed one from another but by their beauty and wit, their virtue and their courage. As they were excluded from dignities, it was only by their perſonal merit, that they made themſelves conſiderable, and acquired glory. Lucretia got herſelf a great name by her chaſtity in giving her huſband, at the expence of her life, an heroick inſtance of her innocence; and, in the vengeance which ſhe took on herſelf for the crime of Tarquin's ſon, ſhe left the ladies a model of conjugal fidelity, which we do not find that many have copied after.

Clelia, and her companions, made themſelves famous for their courage, boldneſs, and love for their country; and Porcia, Cato's daughter, by ſwallowing burning coals, in order to procure to herſelf that death which her friends would have hindered her from; but ſhe deceived the vigilance of thoſe who watched her, by that action which has made ſo much noiſe in hiſtory. But from the time that the emperors made themſelves abſolute maſters of the republick, their wives partook with them in their grandeur, their glory, and their power; the Roman people, being then given up to flattery as much as they had formerly been jealous of their liberty, ſtrove to give the empreſſes pompous and magnificent titles, and to decree them extraordinary and exceſſive honours. One might then ſee the

emperors wives honoured with the titles of Auguſt and Mothers of their Country. Some of them had place in the ſenate, governed Rome and the empire, gave audience to ambaſſadors, and diſpoſed of poſts and employments; others were conſecrated prieſteſſes, and even exalted to the rank of goddeſſes.

It is of theſe empreſſes that this book treats; and particular care has been taken to diſtinguiſh thoſe who were of, or who were married into, Auguſtus's family, becauſe they were the moſt remarkable. All the facts here reported are taken from original authors; and, for our juſtification, as much care as poſſible has been taken all along, to quote our authorities.

In ſpeaking of the empreſſes, it would to be ſure have been very difficult to be quite ſilent as to the emperors; we have even enlarged upon ſome of theſe princes, becauſe we did not doubt but many, who may peruſe this book, will not be at all ſorry to find in it a part of their hiſtory. If I have not mentioned all that might have been ſaid of theſe empreſſes, I believe I have, at leaſt, reported as much as was neceſſary to make them known. To ſay the truth, I have been ſometimes almoſt tempted to ſuppreſs a great many things which I have, nevertheleſs, been obliged to touch upon, but yet with all the regard to decency a man can have, who would be extreamly ſorry to offend againſt the rules of good manners. But I hope that no body will have any great reaſon to blame me upon that ſubject, ſince, even in the moſt ſhameful paſſages of theſe empreſſes lives, I have carefully avoided making uſe of any ſhocking expreſſions: I choſe to be rather a little obſcure in ſome places, than to explain too well, the meaning of the authors, by an over faithful tranſlation.

CALPURNIA,

CALPURNIA,

Wife of JULIUS CÆSAR.

JULIUS CÆSAR had four wives, the firſt was Coſſutia, daughter of a Roman knight, and extreamly rich. He was very young when he married her, and as his inclinations were not much conſulted in this match, he put her away before he had cohabited with her, in order to eſpouſe Cornelia, daughter of Cinna, who was diſtinguiſhed by having been four t mes conſul. This alliance drew upon him the jalouſy of Sylla, whoſe power was very formidable at Rome, where every thing was governed accordingly to his will and pleaſure.

This dictator, who was Cinna's mortal enemy, uſed all his endeavours to oblige Cæſar to put away Cornelia, but in vain; Cæſar was not a man capable of yielding eaſily to another, and having been brought up by his aunt Julia (Marius's wife) was, from his infancy, taught that invincible averſion that all Marius's relations had to Sylla; for they had oppoſed themſelves as a barrier againſt the tyrannical power of this dictator. On the other hand, Cæſar loved Cornelia, but if he could have prevailed upon himſelf to put her away, eſpecially to pleaſe Sylla, his father-in-law Cinna was powerful enough to make him repent it.

Sylla being then poſſeſſed of a power little leſs than abſolute, and imagining that every thing ought to give way to him, was extreamly exaſperated at the reſiſtance which he met with in Cæſar; and to puniſh him, ſtripped him of the prieſthood, ſeized every thing belonging to him and his wife, deprived him of all right of ſucceſſion,

ceſſion, and would probably have carried his reſentment further, if he had not been taken up with getting rid of ſome other enemies whom he thought more conſiderable; and if the veſtal virgins [a], and many other perſons of importance, had not intereſted themſelves for Cæſar.

Sylla,

[a] Numa Pompilius, ſecond king of Rome, cauſed a temple to be built in honour of the goddeſs Veſta, in which was preſerved the fire called ſacred and eternal, becauſe it was never ſuffered to go out; and he inſtituted religious women (a ſort of nuns) whoſe buſineſs it was to take care of it, and who were named veſtals from the goddeſs Veſta, to whom they were dedicated. The oldeſt of theſe virgins was ſtiled the great veſtal, and ſhe had a ſupreme authority over the reſt. They vowed to preſerve their virginity for thirty years, after which, they were permitted to quit that ſtate and to marry, or paſs the remainder of their lives as they thought proper; but few made uſe of this liberty, for it was obſerved, that as many of them as had quitted their profeſſion to marry or live in the world, were afflicted in the latter end of their lives with perpetual ſickneſs, diſorders, and a thouſand misfortunes, which were looked upon as juſt puniſhment for their deſertion. This had poſſeſſed people's minds with ſuperſtition and fear, ſo that there were ſcarce any of the veſtals that had courage enough to quit their condition. As for thoſe who broke their vows before the expiration of the thirty years, and were guilty of any breach of chaſtity, they were condemned to death and the manner thus:— They were buried alive in a deep dungeon, which was dug on pupoſe in a place called the accurſed field. They were let down with their faces covered, as being unworthy to ſee the light, and nothing allowed them but a lamp lighted, a little bread and water, ſome milk and ſome oyl. And the day wherein they were thus interred, all the town was in mourning, the ſhops ſhut up, and nothing to be ſeen on every ſide but the deepeſt melancholy. Her ſacrilegious accomplice had alſo

Sylla, who was extreamly penetrating and well acquainted with the enterpriſing genius of that

alſo his ſhare in the puniſhment as he had in the crime, for he was whipped to death. As the moſt eſſential part of the veſtals duty conſiſted in their maintaining the ſacred fire day and night, they were continually upon the watch; but if any of them were ſo negligent as to let it go out (which was reckoned the forerunner of ſome dreadful calamity) the offender was chaſtiſed very rigorouſly, for ſhe was ſcourged quite naked by the great prieſt in a dark place behind a curtain. This ſeverity was the reaſon that no body cared to make their daughters veſtals; on the contrary, every one ſought pretences to avoid it. Whence it happened that they were afterwards obliged to take them by force. The emperors ſometimes recompenced the generoſity of thoſe who offered their daughters with a good grace. And we read that Tiberius, after the death of Occia the great veſtal, being under ſome difficulties about filling up her place, and Pontius Agrippa having preſented his daughter (who nevertheleſs was not received) rewarded the good intention of that ſenator, by making the young lady a preſent of a ſum amounting to fifty thouſand livres. It is to be obſerved, that it was not every girl that could be admitted into this order, for ſhe was not to be leſs than ſix years old, nor more than ten; ſhe was to have no defect in her ſpeech or limbs, nor ſubject to any diſorder. Her parents were to have been exempt from a ſtate of ſervitude, and ſuch as never had followed any low occupation. They even gave the preference to the daughters of ſuch women as had been but once married. When none offered themſelves voluntarily, the great pontiff fingled out twenty girls, who drew lots, and he pitched upon her whoſe lot it was. She was carried immediately to the temple of Veſta, ſhaved, and clad in the proper habit, for it would have been a very immodeſt and ſcandalous thing if one of theſe virgins had made uſe of any dreſs or ornaments

that ambitious Roman, foreſaw the misfortunes that he would one day bring upon the republick; he therefore not only oppoſed Cæſar's friends, by all the reaſons he was maſter of, but diſguiſeing his private reſentment under the maſk of the publick intereſt, endeavoured to perſuade them that they ought to be ſo far from interceding for Cæſar, that they ſhould contribute all they could to his deſtruction, who, if he were ſuffered to live, would ſome time or other ruin the party of the nobility, which they themſelves had defended with ſo much zeal and courage. Fortune

that were not ſuitable to the ſanctity of her profeſſion; and Titus Livius tells us, that the veſtal Minucia was extreamly blamed for having dreſſed in a manner not conformable to her condition. The accuſation was not without grounds, as the event proved; for ſoon after, Minucia was condemned to undergo the puniſhment appointed for thoſe who loſt their virginity. The veſtals had a right to ſeveral privileges, and had revenues aſſigned them by the publick. When they walked abroad, they were preceded by lictors, like the magiſtrates; and if they met any criminal going to execution, he was pardoned, provided the veſtal made oath that her meeting him was mere chance, and that there was no deſign in it. Their perſons were ſacred; and at publick aſſemblies they were intitled to the chief places. In ſhort, the Romans had the greateſt reſpect for them. They reconciled the grandees when any quarrel happened among them, and no body durſt refuſe them any thing they aſked, ſo much were they eſteemed. This was the reaſon that Cæſar's friends, in order to obtain his pardon from Sylla, had recourſe to the veſtals. Their number was limited to ſix by king Servius, but afterwards they were increaſed to twenty.

We muſt not forget to take notice that, if the holy fire happened to go out, it was not to be rekindled but by lightning or the rays of the ſun.

tune however reſcued Cæſar from the hatred of Sylla. The dictator being at laſt overcome by the importunity of thoſe whom he could not well refuſe, was obliged to pardon him; but to ſhew them how unwillingly he complyed with their requeſt, "I grant you (ſays he) what you aſk, "but remember that more than one Marius is "concealed in the perſon of Cæſar."

Cæſar was [b] quæſtor when he loſt his wife Cornelia; and as he loved her beyond meaſure, he was exceſſively afflicted at her death. He gave publick marks of his grief, by the pompous elogy which he pronounced upon that occaſion

[b] The employment of quæſtor was one of the moſt ancient in Rome, and was reckoned an introduction into affairs of the greateſt importance. No body could enjoy it who was not twenty-ſeven years of age. At the beginning there were but two of them, who had the charge of the publick treaſure and enſigns of war; but Italy having been all made tributary, and the revenues of the republick being conſiderably increaſed, ſix more were added, and Sylla augmented them to twenty; but Cæſar made them ſtill more numerous. Of all theſe quæſtors no more than two reſided at Rome, who kept regiſters of all the receipts and payments of the republick, and the reſt were ſent into the provinces to keep an account of the revenues ordinary, extraordinary and caſual; as for example, the ſpoils taken in war, or at the ſurrender of towns, the ſale of priſoners, and other like occaſions. The employment of quæſtor became more honourable under the emperors, for when the prince could not, or would not, go to the ſenate, he ſent thither his orders by the quæſtors. They took cognizance of all cauſes relating to the publick debts, a power which Nero deprived them of, to give it to the intendant or commiſſary of the town. The emperor Claudius added ſeveral new honours to this employ; but on the other hand he diſgraced it by rendering it venal, by Dolabella's advice.

from the Tribunal of Harangues[c]; and certainly he had all the reaſon in the world to lament his loſs, for Pompeia, whom he married ſoon after, gave him a great deal of vexation.

She was daughter to Pompeius Rufus, and niece to Sylla. This lady was young, handſome, lively, and of ſo amorous a complexion, that ſhe did not value herſelf upon an over-ſtrict fidelity to her huſband, whom ſhe married perhaps much more through policy * than inclination. She carried her complaiſance very far for [d] Publius Clodius. This perſon was of an illuſtrious family, whoſe antiquity ſurpaſſed that of Rome itſelf. He ‡ was then in the flower of his

* Sueton. vit. Jul. Cæſ.

‡ Plutar. vit. Cæſ. vit. Cicer.

[c] There was at Rome in the middle of the great ſquare called Forum Romanum, a temple dedicated to Fortune, adorned with the iron and copper belonging to the ſhips of Antium which were taken by the Romans. Of the beaks of thoſe ſhips was make a ſort of tribunal or pulpit raiſed very high, upon which the magiſtrates mounted when they were diſpoſed to harangue the people. Round this tribunal were ranged the ſtatues of many great men of the republick. It was alſo from this place that funeral orations were pronounced; and there it was that Cicero ſo frequently thundered out his eloquence. It was afterwards diſgraced, by fixing upon it the heads of the greateſt men of the republick. Marius cauſed to be put there the head of Mark Anthony the orator, (who formerly had adorned it with triumphal ſpoils.) He alſo placed young Marius's head there; and Mark Anthony the triumvir expoſed in that place the head and right hand of Cicero.

[d] Publius Clodius was deſcended from the noble houſe of the Clodians, who had always maintained the intereſts of the ſenate and patricians againſt the people; and Clodius, of whom we are now ſpeaking, was the firſt of his name that took part with the people againſt

his age, very handſome in his perſon, and poſſeſſed of vaſt riches, which he did not always make the beſt uſe of. He had a great deal of very agreeable wit, and a chearful humour, always diſpoſed to mirth and pleaſure; but raſh in his enterpriſes, irregular in his deſires, furious in his hatred, impudent in his manners, neither reſpecting laws nor magiſtrates; ſhewing in his countenance that air of aſſurance which independence is apt to give; inclined to the moſt infamous actions, witneſs his abominations with his own ſiſters; in ſhort, ready to hazard every thing to gratify thoſe appetites which are generally the unfortunate attendants of giddy youth, and in which he was encouraged by the bad example of many of the moſt illuſtrious citizens of Rome, now grown weary of being virtuous.

Clodius, being the perſon I have deſcribed him, inſinuated himſelf into the good graces of Cæſar's wife, and preſently diſcovered that he was not indifferent to her. Aurelia, Cæſar's mother, * a lady of great penetration and of the ſtricteſt virtue, was not the laſt that perceived it. She therefore narrowly watched the conduct of her daughter-in-law, whoſe behaviour ſeemed very ſuſpicious: Aurelia was an Argus not eaſily to be lulled aſleep.

Clodius put in practice all his cunning and ſtratagems to ſee Cæſar's wife, but to no purpoſe;

* Plutar. vit. Cæſ. & in Re. Apepht.

againſt the ſenate. He cauſed himſelf to be adopted by a plebeian, that he might be capable of being choſen tribune of the people; and we ſhall ſee what uſe he made of the authority which that employment furniſhed him with. Clodius's wife was named Fulvia, by whom he had his daughter Clodia, who was married to Auguſtus, and divorced ſoon after.

poſe; for Pompeia could not move a ſtep without being guarded by her mother-in-law. Wherever ſhe went, ſhe was ſtill accompanied by this ſevere ſpy, who ſaw into her very thoughts, and watched her ſo cloſe, that it was impoſſible for her to ſteal one favourable glance.

Aurelia was however impoſed upon at laſt by the two lovers, in ſpight of all her vigilance. Love took a pleaſure in deceiving her, by inſpiring Clodius with a ſecret way of ſeeing his miſtreſs. Every year a ſolemn ſacrifice was performed at Rome in honour of The Good Goddeſs [e] in one of the conſuls houſes, and in their abſence, in one of the prætors [f]. Amongſt other

[e] The Good Goddeſs had many names, but Fauna was the true one. She was wife of one Faunus, and was ſo prudent, modeſt, and chaſte, that it is reported no man but her huſband ſo much as knew her name, and that none elſe had ever ſeen her face. A misfortune that happened to this rare woman occaſioned her being made a goddeſs. Her huſband being one day abſent, ſhe found, by chance, a bottle of wine, which ſhe taſted, and finding it good, made ſo free of it as to be drunk, being quite ignorant of its nature, and never having met with it before. Faunus happened to come in juſt then, and finding her in this condition, in the heat of his paſſion ſeized ſome twigs of myrtle, of which he made a whip, and gave her ſo many ſtrokes, that ſhe died of it. This cruel correction was followed by a bitter repentance; he was aſhamed of this violence, and the merit of his wife, whom he had treated with ſo much injuſtice and inhumanity, greatly added to his grief. The evil being however paſt remedy, and not having it in his power to reſtore her to life, he was reſolved to make her a goddeſs by procuring her immortality.

[f] After the kings of Rome were baniſhed, two conſuls were created, who had the adminiſtration of affairs.

But

other very odd ceremonies eſſentially neceſſary upon this occaſion, that of never celebrating them but by night was moſt ſcrupulouſly obſerved, and no man whatſoever was to be admitted, not even the conſul or prætor at whoſe houſe

But when it happened that the conſuls were obliged to quit the town to command the armies, they created a prætor to adminiſter juſtice in Rome, and he was to ſupply the place of the conſuls, for when they were abſent, his power was very conſiderable: he had then authority to aſſemble the ſenate, in which he preſided; to aboliſh ſome laws, and to make new ones. It was alſo at his houſe that the ſacrifice to the Good Goddeſs was celebrated. In ſhort, all the power of the conſuls was then veſted in him. At firſt the prætor was choſen out of the order of patricians, but afterwards the plebeians were alſo admitted to that employ. And becauſe one prætor was not ſufficient for the town, on account of the great number of ſtrangers who flocked thither upon buſineſs, they created another, whoſe duty it was to diſpatch the affairs of theſe ſtrangers, called Prætor Peregrinus Afterwards they were increaſed to ſix; two of which were to decide the differences and diſputes of private perſons, and the others took cognizance of ſuch crimes as were of a publick nature. At laſt all the provinces being become tributary, and fallen under the yoke and government of the Romans, other prætors were ordained and ſent into the provinces. They had a right to wear the robe called Prætext, and to be preceded by lictors, and even to command the troops that were in their reſpective provinces. The town prætor lodged in the palace that formerly belonged to the kings. His tribunal was called the Prætorium, and from thence came the name of the guards called the Prætorian Cohorts, becauſe they were appointed to attend the prætor, and waited upon him in the hall of juſtice during his ſtay there. The prætors were not to be abſent from Rome above ten days. When the prætor condemned any perſon to death, he quitted his purple robe and appeared in deep mourning.

houſe they were ſolemnized. The wife or mother of the conſul or prætor preſided, and was aſſiſted by the veſtal virgins. Nothing could gain admittance that had the leaſt appearance of the male ſex. The ladies took ſo much care to be exempt from all ſuſpicion of gallantry*, that they were not permitted to have ſo much as a ſprig of myrtle in their noſegays, becauſe that ſhrub was dedicated to Venus.

Whatever danger the tranſgreſſion of theſe laws was attended with, and againſt which no body till then had ever dared to offend, Clodius, hurried on by the impetuoſity of his headſtrong, unthinking youth, was incapable of making reflections; and therefore, without the leaſt ſcruple, reſolved to prophane theſe ſolemnities, and lay hold on that opportunity of ſeeing Cæſar's wife. The ſacrifice was to be celebrated that year at her houſe, and that night was intended to be for her a night of triumph: ſhe was to appear in the aſſembly with all her graces and charms. Much would have been wanting to her ſatisfaction, if her lover was not to have ſeen her in her beauty, and Clodius could never have ſurvived the grief of ſuch a diſappointment.

They agreed then to ſee each other in the very place of the ſacrifice, without troubling themſelves about the danger to which they were expoſed, nor the difficulties that lay in their way. The enterprize was hazardous, but love is, more than ever, deſirous to triumph upon ſuch occaſions; ſo the deſign was thus concerted. It was determined that Clodius ſhould be dreſſed in womens cloaths, that he ſhould enter Cæſar's houſe in the croud, and that Abra, one of Pompeia's women who was in the ſecret, ſhould introduce

* Plutar. Quæſt. Rer. Rom.

troduce the diſguiſed lover into her chamber, where Pompeia was to meet him. This girl was miſtreſs of all the addreſs that was neceſſary to conduct an intrigue, and Clodius had made her intirely his friend. He knew that in affairs of gallantry, it was impoſſible not to have ſome confident, and a chamber-maid has a natural right to a truſt of that nature.

Theſe meaſures being taken, and the hour of ſacrifice come, Clodius, without fear or foreſight, gives himſelf up to his fortune; takes a woman's habit, and, being young, his countenance did not betray him; joins thoſe who were going into Cæſar's houſe, and being favoured by the darkneſs of the night and his diſguiſe, went in with them to aſſiſt at the ſacrifice. Abra took care to be punctually at the door to receive him, and having very cunningly conducted him into her chamber, ran to give Pompeia notice that her lover waited for her.

Time, which ſeems very tedious upon theſe occaſions, appeared much ſo to Clodius, and the more, for that Abra, (by ſome of thoſe unlucky accidents which often happen in adventures of this kind) was employed about other matters, (probably by order of Aurelia) and could not, of a long time, carry an anſwer to the metamorphoſed lover, who was all this while very uneaſy, and being naturally of a reſtleſs temper, was extreamly fretted by theſe delays, which he accounted for by a thouſand reaſons, without hitting upon the true one; and his uneaſineſs increaſing every moment, fooliſhly quitted the chamber and wandered about the houſe. This impatience quite ſpoiled all the meaſures he had ſettled with Pompeia; for, not knowing what to do, and affecting to hide his face by avoiding the light and the company,

gave

gave room for ſuſpicion. A ſervant maid of the houſe taking him for a woman, aſked him who he was, and what he looked for? This ſmart queſtion diſconcerted him; he ſeemed in confuſion, but at laſt anſwered that he wanted Abra. The concern he was in, together with the ſound of his voice, which did not agree with his dreſs, diſcovered the myſtery; the maid found out the cheat, and began to cry out as loud as ſhe could, that there was, in the houſe, a man in woman's cloaths.

This uproar ruined the two lovers and their ſchemes, and ſtruck all the aſſembly with aſtoniſhment. The lady rambled about the houſe without knowing whither, and had trouble enough to find Clodius, whom ſhe hid again in the ſame chamber, after rating him ſeverely for his imprudence. This unfortunate accident, which was enough to put to a nonplus the greateſt preſence of mind and quickeſt invention, embarraſſed her beyond deſcription. In the mean time the ſacrifice and all the ceremonies are interrupted, Aurelia commands all the doors to be ſhut and flambeaus to be brought, and after a moſt diligent ſearch in every corner, finds Clodius in the confident's chamber, and turned him out.

This ſcandalous affair, happening among a company of women, it cannot be ſuppoſed it ſhould remain a ſecret. The ladies longed to be at home to communicate it to their huſbands, and conſequently it was all over the town the next morning. Pompeia and Clodius became the ſubjects of all the converſation; and nothing was ſpoke of but this raſh undertaking. Cæſar, being thoroughly perſuaded that Clodius did not proceed in this affair unknown to Pompeia, put her away.

One

[8] One of the tribunes, in the mean time, takes cognizance of this ſacrilegious affair, and Clodius is cited to his trial; but finding that the beſt thing he could do was to deny the whole charge, he proteſted that he was falſly accuſed, and that he was abſent from Rome the night of this ſacrifice, which he offered to prove: The examination did not at all make for him. A great many witneſſes depoſed againſt him, and among

[8] The people being quite wearied out with the tyranny of uſurers and the oppreſſions they ſuffered under the grandees of Rome, retired into one quarter of the town and mutinied. Agrippa, a moſt prudent and much eſteemed ſenator, was deputed to quell this ſedition, and knew ſo well how to manage them, that he was ſo happy as to ſucceed upon certain conditions; the principal of which was, that the people ſhould have their own magiſtrates, that they ſhould be choſen from their own community, and that their perſons ſhould be ſafe and inviolable. They were called Tribunes of the People. At firſt only two were created, but afterwards they were increaſed to twenty, and were deſigned, at the beginning, only to defend the people againſt the power of the grandees, but in time became ſo formidable as to counterbalance the authority of the conſuls; for the tribunes had a right to convoke the people as often as they thought proper, without interruption from any perſon whatſoever. They had power to eſtabliſh laws which ſhould bind the three orders, and took under their protection all ſuch as had recourſe to them, and by thoſe means, ſheltered them againſt the purſuits of all other magiſtrates, excepting the dictator. They had alſo a right to oppoſe the decrees of the ſenate, which they examined into. They could even impriſon the conſuls; for as their perſons were in a manner ſacred, no body had courage enough to oppoſe them. Sylla indeed leſſened their power conſiderably, and the emperors afterwards aboliſhed intirely this dignity, as being oppoſite to the tyranny they aſſumed.

among the reſt, Cicero declared that Clodius conſulted him at Rome that very day *. This evidence was of ſo much weight as to leave no room for doubt, and amounted to a demonſtration, in a place where the honeſty and uprightneſs of Cicero was held in the higheſt veneration [h].

Clodius

* Valer. Max. lib. 8. c. 5.

[h] It is well known that Cicero was one of the greateſt men that ever Rome produced. His name is derived from the Latin word Cicer or vetch, becauſe the firſt man that gave ſome reputation to the family had on his noſe a wart that reſembled a pea. Cicero however would never change his name; and when his friends attempted to perſuade him to it, he anſwered, that he would make his name ſo famous that few ſhould ſurpaſs it. His merit raiſed him to the higheſt dignities of the republick, of whoſe liberties he was always a moſt generous and zealous defender. He diſcovered Catiline's conſpiracy, and cauſed the authors and accomplices to be puniſhed as they deſerved, which procured him the love and eſteem of all the Romans. Cicero was the greateſt orator that ever was born; and it may be affirmed, that his concluſions were a ſort of law to the ſenate. He had frequent quarrels with Clodius and Marc Anthony. It is reported that he was one of thoſe who conſpired againſt Julius Cæſar, and that Brutus, after that prince had been aſſaſſinated in the ſenate-houſe, looking about for Cicero, ſhewed him his ſword yet ſmoaking with the blood of Cæſar, and cried out to him, that Rome had at laſt recovered its liberty. Cicero was reproached with being of a very timid and cowardly diſpoſition. In reality, whenever he ſaw any ſoldiers near the ſenate-houſe, he was obſerved to be in pain, and did not plead without confuſion. He had alſo a large ſhare of vanity, and never ſpoke a quarter of an hour without running into praiſes of himſelf, and putting the ſenate in mind of the publick ſervices he had done.

Clodius little expected that Cicero, upon whom he had conferred great obligations, ſhould have appeared againſt him; he had ſheltered and protected Cicero from Catiline's reſentment, who many a time would have attempted to kill him, if Clodius had not perpetually ſtood between him and danger, and he was not a man to ſee his friend inſulted. So conſiderable a piece of

done. He married Terentia, by whom he had a daughter, who was married to Piſo, and afterwards to Lentulus; alſo another who ſurvived him, and a ſon called Marcus Cicero. Towards the latter end of his life he put away Terentia, becauſe he imagined ſhe deſpiſed him, and that during his abſence ſhe had diſſipated his ſubſtance and contracted debts. But when he married a young girl ſoon after, whom he was much in love with, people were apt to attribute that divorce to other reaſons. He alſo put away his ſecond wife, after the death of his daughter, who died in child bed, becauſe he fancied ſhe rejoiced at his loſs, which was very great, for he loved her with the utmoſt tenderneſs. Terentia lived one hundred and ſeventeen years. It is ſaid that Cicero's mother at his birth felt no pain. He was called Marcus Tullius Cicero. In the beginning of the ſixteenth century, a tomb was diſcovered in the high road near Terrachina, which was called by the Romans Via Appia, and in it was found the body of a young girl ſwimming in a certain unknown liquor. The corps had fair hair turned up with a gold buckle, and as freſh as if alive. At the feet of the body was a lamp burning, which went out as ſoon as the air came to it. By the inſcriptions it appeared that it had been buried in that place fifteen hundred years, and was ſuppoſed to be the body of Tullia, Cicero's daughter. It was carried to Rome, and expoſed in the capitol, where great crouds of people came to view it; but as the credulous multitude would needs have it to be the body of a ſaint, becauſe it was not corrupted, the pope ordered it to be thrown by night into the Tiber.

of ſervice, added to the ſtricteſt friendſhip that always ſubſiſted between them, was the reaſon that Clodius could never forgive this depoſition of Cicero, which he thought the higheſt ingratitude, and had ever after an implacable hatred to him [1].

It

[1] Clodius being full of reſentment againſt Cicero, got himſelf choſen tribune of the people, on purpoſe to be revenged. In effect, he baniſhed him the town, ſet his country-houſe on fire as well as that which he had at Rome, cauſed all his goods to be ſold at cant, and vexed him by all poſſible means. Cicero retired to Dyrachium, whoſe inhabitants received him with the utmoſt reſpect, and he ſtaid there till Milo, who was choſen tribune, recalled him, and openly eſpouſed his intereſts, by declaring himſelf for Cicero, againſt Clodius; for Milo, who was a man of ſpirit and great quality, deſpiſed a perſon that could with ſo much ſpight and cruelty perſecute the moſt zealous and faithful citizen of Rome. This occaſioned a falling out between Clodius and Milo, which came to the greateſt degree of hatred, and from that time they fought for nothing but opportunities of plaguing each other. Clodius was the firſt that declared war; for perceiving that Milo ſtrove for the conſulſhip, he did all he could to oppoſe him, and to that purpoſe aſſiſted Scipio and Hypſius the other competitors. The two parties were extreamly irritated, and almoſt came to blows. During this diſpute, Clodius, returning from Aricia, met Milo on the Appian way as he was going to Lanuvia. Their ſervants began the fray, and the maſters at laſt engaged with great fury, till Clodius was killed. This accident put all the town in an uproar; and the ſenate, to prevent greater diſorders, created Pompey conſul, and ordered him to enquire into the murder. Pompey named commiſſaries out of every order of the town; and Milo recommended his cauſe to Cicero, whom he prayed to defend him. This orator, who had infinite obligations to Milo,

exerted

It is certain that Cicero was more to be pitied than blamed. He did not give his evidence willingly, nor appear againſt Clodius till he was compelled to it by an authority more to be feared than that of the tribune. Terentia, his wife, a moſt obſtinate and furious woman, obliged him to act thus. She was provoked againſt Clodius, becauſe his ſiſter Clodia had attempted to ſteal from her her huſband's affections. This lady, being very beautiful, was much taken with the merit of Cicero, (who had exalted himſelf to the conſulſhip through all the degrees of honour, and was in the higheſt eſteem at Rome) and would have been very well pleaſed to have married him. As this could not be brought about but by Cicero's divorcing his wife, Clodia underhand employed one Tullus in the affair, an intimate friend of Cicero, who viſited him every day, and who was very familiar with Clodius, at whoſe houſe he had alſo free acceſs.

As ſoon as Terentia had diſcovered this ſecret negotiation, ſhe became furiouſly jealous, which made her the ſcourge of her family. As ſhe was not a woman to ſwallow her grief ſilently, ſhe made an uproar that would have wearied out the patience

exerted the whole force of his eloquence, and compoſed that admirable ſpeech (Orat. pro Milone) which any body that pleaſes may ſee; but his manner of uttering it was not of a piece with the compoſition; for Pompey having poſted ſome ſoldiers about the place to prevent diſorders, Cicero was intimidated ſo much, that in pleading, he did not pronounce half the excellent things he had prepared, ſo that Milo was condemned to a ſevere baniſhment to Marſeilles. It is reported, that reading one day the oration of Cicero which was compoſed for that occaſion, he ſaid, that if Cicero had ſpoke it as it was wrote, Milo would not then be employed in catching oyſters at Marſeilles.

patience of a ſtoick. Never was Cicero's virtue and philoſophy put to ſo ſevere a trial; his wife made the houſe ring again with her continual bawling, and as Clodia was out of her reach, ſhe diſcharged her rage upon every body about her. She deſired nothing ſo much as an opportunity of ſhewing her hatred, and greedily ſeized that which this affair of Clodius furniſhed her with; ſo making uſe of the abſolute authority ſhe had aſſumed over her huſband, ſhe forced him to depoſe againſt the brother of her rival. No doubt but it was committing a great violence upon him, who was very ſenſible of the favours he had received from Clodius, but obey he muſt, and eſteemed himſelf happy enough to make peace in his family upon thoſe terms.

Cicero, however, was not the only perſon that accuſed Clodius; for people of all ſorts witneſſed againſt him, and charged him with numerous crimes; even Lucullus, his brother-in-law, produced a ſervant-maid, who depoſed, that Clodius, by a horrible inceſt, had rendered his ſiſter unfaithful to her huſband [k].

It is certain that no body thought him innocent, and he never would have been acquitted, if the ſeverity of the laws had been put in force; but his high birth and great alliances, which took in all the nobility of Rome, together with the protection

[k] Clodius had three ſiſters whom he brutally abuſed; the eldeſt, called Terentia, was married to Marcius Rex, and Clodia, the ſecond, to Metellus Celer. She was called in deriſion Quadrantaria; for, not being reckoned very cruel, ſhe had been played a ſcurvy trick by her lover, who inſtead of money which he had promiſed her, ſent her a purſe full of Quatrans, a ſort of ſmall coin of baſe metal. The youngeſt was wife to Lucullus.

protection of the people, who unanimouſly declared for him, outweighed his crime.

Thus did favour take place of juſtice, and he eſcaped the puniſhment he deſerved, how glaring ſoever his fault was.

It is true that the ſenate, to ſave appearances, had recourſe to expedients *. The majority of the judges gave their opinion in a confuſed ſort of manner; and the ſentence was couched in ſuch unintelligible terms, that they were forced to explain it by another; which affected obſcurity brought him off.

The moſt remarkable circumſtance in this affair was, that whilſt Cæſar's friends were extreamly zealous for his honour, he himſelf was quite indifferent. He was too well acquainted with his wife's gallantries to imagine that this was the firſt inſtance of her tranſgreſſion. He had taken ſome pains to examine into the matter, and probably found out more than he had a mind to know. He was, however, cited to be heard, but did not think proper to complain much. So unſeaſonable a tranquility ſurprized every body. He was interrogated as to his wife's adultery, but anſwered that he knew nothing of it. He had indeed put her away, which was a tacit acknowledgment of her guilt; but being aſked why he did ſo, anſwered, that Cæſar's wife ought to be exempt not only from crime but from ſuſpicion.

He met with one of that character in Calpurnia, Piſo's daughter †. As Cæſar was already grown very powerful, he deſtined his new father-in-law to ſucceed him in the conſulſhip, that ſublime

* Plutar. Vita Cæſar. Vita Cicer.

† (See Note 18.)

ſublime [1] dignity which was then ſo much ſought after *.

Cato, that ſevere cenſurer of all thoſe that had more than ordinary ambition, could not ſee with patience this ſort of traffick, but openly declaimed againſt ſuch an encroachment on the publick liberty, and ſaid it was a ſhame that the command of the armies, the government of provinces, and the principal dignities of the republick, ſhould

* Sueton. in Jul. Cæſ.

[1] After the Romans had ſhook off Tarquin's yoke, they created other magiſtrates, in whoſe hands the government of the republick was intruſted. They were called conſuls, from the Latin word Conſulere, which ſignifies to take care of any thing, to the end that their name might continually put them in mind of their duty. There were but two of them: they continued a year in their employ, and were abſolute in their authority as long as it laſted. They could not obtain it till they were forty-three years of age. The conſuls were chiefs of the council. They had a ſovereign command in the town, the armies, and the provinces. They were alſo at firſt called prætors, but afterwards another officer was created and diſtinguiſhed by that name, the conſuls being known by no other title than that of conſul. They were always choſen in the field of Mars, and taken from among the patricians, till the Lician law, which ordained that one of them ſhould be a plebeian. The conſuls were preceded by twelve lictors, who carried bundles of rods with hatchets tied up in them, to ſcourge or behead upon the ſpot, if neceſſary. The chief of them was called the great conſul, and the other was his partner in the conſulſhip. No body was ſuperior to them, for their power was abſolute, which the law of the twelve tables ſufficiently ſhews, viz. "Regio Imperio duo "ſunto, iique præcundo, judicando, conſulendo, Præ-"tores, judices, Conſules appellantur; Militiæ ſum-"mum jus habendo; nemini parento; ollis ſalus Po-"puli Romani ſuprema Lex eſto."

ſhould be proſtituted at that rate, and depend upon marriages. This however was the laſt fault of that nature that Cæſar was guilty of; for he found, in Calpurnia, every quality that could deſerve his eſteem.

She was of an illuſtrious family, deſcended from Numa Pompilius, ſecond king of Rome. Her beauty was accompanied with a conſummate prudence, penetrating wit, a degree of eloquence that did not yield to that of the greateſt orators, and a true Roman generoſity; ſhe was, in ſhort, ſuch a woman as Cæſar's wife ought to be, who, having formed the vaſteſt and moſt audacious project that the mind of man was capable of, aſpired to no leſs than the conqueſt of the world.

In all degrees and viciſſitudes of fortune, ſhe preſerved an evenneſs of temper that nothing could alter; for, however high a condition Cæſar had exalted himſelf to, by his victories and triumphs, ſhe never became the more haughty or proud; every day of her life was the ſame.

It certainly was a rare thing to meet with ſo much modeſty in ſuch a glorious ſtation; and was the more commendable in Calpurnia, becauſe every thing ſeemed to flatter her ambition and vanity. Her fortune could not but be extraordinary, ſince it was the ſame with Cæſar's, who, from a plain Roman ſenator, was, by his ſuperior genius, and prodigious courage, become maſter of the Romans. His arms, which ſo many conqueſts had rendered terrible to all the world, were alſo formidable to Rome: and this republick, ſo jealous of her liberty; this republick, who had given laws to ſo many nations, and brought ſo many people under the yoke, was obliged to ſuffer that of one of its own citizens. The ſenate, that moſt venerable body, maſter of

all

all the kings of the earth, became a ſlave to Cæſar. One might ſee all thoſe grandees, of which it was compoſed, ſtriving to outdo each other in reſpect and ſubmiſſion, and decreeing to the tyrant of their liberties, the moſt pompous and moſt ſacred honours.

They ſtiled him, Father of his Country, made him perpetual dictator[a], that ſovereign dignity, which Sylla, with all his power and authority, never dared to keep poſſeſſion of, becauſe it became odious the moment any perſon attempted to do ſo.

Cæſar had a diſtinguiſhed place in the ſenate. They cauſed a temple to be erected to his honour

[a] The dictatorſhip was an extraordinary employ, which the Romans never had recourſe to, but upon the moſt preſſing occaſions, and when the republick was threatened with ſome imminent danger. The dictator was choſen by the conſuls; and the election was never made but by night. He had an abſolute power of life and death over the citizens; his ſentence was without appeal, except one example to the contrary, which Titus Livy takes notice of, where we read, that M. Fabius appealed from the judgment of the dictator Papyrius, to the tribunes of the people. "Tribunos "Plebis appello et provoco ad Populum." The dictator was ſtyled the maſter of the people; Magiſter Populi. All the other magiſtrates were ſubordinate to him; his commands were reſpected as ſo many oracles, and the conſuls themſelves were intirely ſubmiſſive to them. He was preceded by twenty-four lictors, and was bound by no law. He named who he pleaſed for general of the horſe, (Magiſter Æquitum), who was an officer next to himſelf in command, and who never fought but on foot. The dictator's commiſſion was in force but ſix months, as they would not give ſo exorbitant a power for a longer time, for fear the perſon in whom it was veſted, ſhould thereby make himſelf the tyrant of the republick.

nour before his palace; and raiſed a ſuperb cupulo on the roof, putting it, by that, on a level with the temples of the gods[b]. They alſo gave his name to one of the months[c] of the year *, placed his ſtatue among thoſe of the gods; and carried their impious and ſacrilegious flattery ſo far, as to grant him immortality even during his life[d].

Among

* Suet. Plutar. vita Jul. Cæſ. Florus. lib. 4. c. 2.

[b] No perſon was permitted to erect a dome on his houſe, which was an honour peculiar to the ſacred temples.

[c] Romulus, firſt king of Rome, made the year conſiſt of ten months, and began it by the month of March, ſo called after the god Mars, whoſe ſon he pretended to be. Numa Pompilius added two more, but the year ſtill began by the month of March. July, being the fifth month, they called it Quintilis, till, in order to do honour to Cæſar, they changed its name to Julius, as they afterwards did the ſixth to Auguſtus, in honour of that emperor.

[d] The apotheoſis, or conferring divinity, was a ceremony obſerved among the Romans, when they had a mind to place an emperor, empreſs, hero, or any other illuſtrious perſon, in the rank of gods. The principal things to be obſerved in this conſecration were theſe: They made an image of wax, reſembling the perſon to whom they were about to grant the divinity; this was placed upon a bed of parade, and the ſenators and other perſons of diſtinction, of both ſexes, went to pay their reſpects to it for ſeven days. The image was afterwards carried with great pomp into the Roman forum, where the praiſes of the deceaſed were ſung, and from thence to the field of Mars without the town, where the elogy was pronounced. The pontifices or prieſts, in the mean time, placed the image on the ſecond ſtep of the funeral pile, which was five decks or ſtories high, and ſhaped like a pyramid, the in-

Among theſe exceſſive honours, Calpurnia was not forgot, and the ſenate, ſo liberal towards Cæſar, did not ſhew themſelves niggardly with regard to her. For beſides thoſe conferred upon her huſband, and which, of courſe, reflected back upon her, they invented particular honours for her. No ſort of praiſes or pompous titles were omitted; for after the ſenate had, by a moſt ſervile complaiſance, granted divinity to Cæſar, what might not his wife pretend to?

But notwithſtanding all this, which one would think was enough to corrupt the ſentiments of any perſon, it made no impreſſion on Calpurnia. Never was the leaſt ſymptom of pride ſeen in her, nor did her elevation get the better of her modeſty. No difference was to be ſeen between Calpurnia, wife of Cæſar the plain ſenator, and of Cæſar, maſter of the world. Her manners were always the ſame, that is, they were always civil and affable. Her goodneſs and ſweetneſs of temper, in the moſt elevated ſtation, were as much admired, as was afterwards that firmneſs of ſoul, which ſhe ſhewed at the unfortunate death of her huſband.

However

ſide of which was filled with ſmall dry wood, and a great quantity of perfumes. At laſt the emperor, aſſiſted by the conſuls and other magiſtrates, ſet fire to it, and as ſoon as it was kindled, they let fly from it an eagle, if the perſon was a man; and if the woman, a peacock. The bird, frighted by the flames, flew off, and the people imagined that it carried away with it the ſoul of the deceaſed, among the gods. After the ceremony, they cauſed a temple to be built in honour of the new divinity. At firſt this extraordinary honour was not eaſily granted: it was the reward of great exploits and ſuperior merit, and never conferred till after the death of the perſon; but afterwards flattery came to ſuch a pitch, that it was given to living people.

However moderate Cæſar's government was, * (who piqued himſelf upon his clemency and generoſity) it yet became inſupportable to a people accuſtomed to liberty, and did not know what it was to be ſlaves, having never obey'd any laws but thoſe which they themſelves had made, and therefore looked upon his prodigious power and elevation to be not ſo much the reward of his merit, as a mark of their weakneſs and indolence: The ſenate was compoſed of an infinite number of great men, ſeveral of whom had commanded Cæſar, and could not bear to yield to an abſolute authority, and be forced to obey him, who but a little before, had been obliged to execute their orders. They could not bring themſelves to be dependent on a man they thought no way ſuperior to them, but by an unlimited ambition. They therefore united, and under the ſpecious name of defenders of the public liberty, (but rather through envy and private reſentment) reſolved to ſhake off this inſupportable yoke, and put a ſpeedy concluſion to Cæſar's power, together with his life.

It was in the hearts of Brutus and Caſſius, that this treaſon was hatched: they gained over to their party a great many of the moſt illuſtrious ſenators; and waited only for an opportunity to put it in execution. They pitched upon a day wherein Cæſar was to aſſemble the ſenate, in order to propoſe affairs of the greateſt importance. Calpurnia had ſecret foretellings of the misfortune that threatened her. She dreamt that the dome (which by a ſolemn decree of the ſenate, had been raiſed on the top of her houſe) fell down, and that Cæſar was murdered in her arms. This frightful dream awaked her, and

* Plutar. Suet. vita Jul. Cæſ.

ſcarce had ſhe opened her eyes, but the doors of her chamber flew open of themſelves, with a great noiſe, which exceedingly ſurpriſed her, as little ſuperſtitious as ſhe was. Her affection for her huſband made her apprehenſive that this could portend no leſs, than ſome dreadful misfortune to him; and her alarms redoubled, when ſhe found him obſtinately determined to go to the ſenate, in ſpite of all theſe preſages, which gave him notice of the impending miſchief; and notwithſtanding all the warnings he had, that his life was in the utmoſt danger, that the ides of March would be productive of ſome direful event; that, that very day would be fatal to him.

Calpurnia added to her prayers and tears, the entreaties of Cæſar's friends, and it was thought all this made ſome impreſſion on the emperor; for he ſeemed to heſitate, whether he ſhould meet the ſenate that day, or put off to another, the propoſal he had to make them about carrying on the war againſt the Parthians. Being at laſt reſolved not to go, becauſe (beſides all this) he was not well; he was ſending Marc Antony to break up the aſſembly, when Decimus Brutus came in, and told him, that the ſenate waited only for him; and that being met by his order, they were determined to honour him with the title of, King of all the provinces, and to prevail on him to wear the regal ornaments: that it would argue an unbecoming weakneſs to mind a woman's dreams, and that it would be too haughty a behaviour to ſend back the ſenators, without ſaluting them, and returning them thanks, at leaſt, for their good intention.

Theſe perſuaſions determined the wavering mind of Cæſar. He ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon; and ſo much the more eaſily, becauſe Brutus lay under the greateſt obligations to him

him, and upon whom he thought he might ſafely depend. He went then to the ſenate, accompanied by theſe falſe friends. He was but a ſmall diſtance from his houſe, when a ſlave was very importunate to ſpeak with him; but not being able to penetrate the crowd that ſurrounded him, he went to Calpurnia, and begged her to keep him at her houſe, till the emperor returned, having, as he ſaid, matters of the greateſt importance to communicate.

Another man, more able, or more fortunate than the firſt, made his way thro' the crowd, and coming up to Cæſar, preſented him a memorial, containing the whole ſecret of the conſpiracy, intreating him to read it immediately, becauſe he would find in it affairs of the utmoſt conſequence. But Cæſar having often attempted to look into it, was ſtill prevented by the people, who talked to him about other matters.

Thus he, being deſtined to deſtruction, entered the ſenate, attended by thoſe, who did not conduct him thither but in order to ſacrifice him to the publick liberty, (which they ſaid he had overthrown) or rather to their own private jealouſy.

It was certainly a great misfortune to him, that Marc Anthony did not go into the ſenate with the reſt, for he was not of the number of thoſe aſſaſſins, but, on the contrary, very much attached to his intereſt, ſo would certainly have defended him [e]. Brutus had foreſeen this, and

[e] Many are of opinion, that Marc Anthony knew the whole affair, which they ſay Trebonius imparted to him as they went together to meet Cæſar; and add, that Marc Anthony, tho' he refuſed to be one of the conſpirators, yet was faithful enough to them not to reveal the ſecret.

therefore contrived to have him ſtopped at the door, pretending earneſt buſineſs, tho' in reality, it was only to give the conſpirators time to finiſh what they were about, and the artifice ſucceeded.

Cæſar was ſcarce ſat down, when the conſpirators came about him as if to do him honour. Cimber began to lay hold of his robe. At this ſignal, which they had agreed upon, Caſca gave him a ſtab with his ponyard, and the reſt of them ſurrounded him with their ſwords drawn.

Cæſar defended himſelf for ſome time, till taking notice of M. Brutus, among his enemies, with his naked ſword, whom he had always aſſiſted to the utmoſt, loaded with benefits, and loved above all men, for more reaſons than one[f]; he then covered himſelf with his robe, ſaying, What, my dear Brutus, art thou alſo in the number of theſe murderers? Theſe were his laſt words; after which he expired in the ſenate-houſe, having received twenty-three wounds.

Thus,

[f] Servilia, Brutus's mother, was the moſt beloved of all Cæſar's miſtreſſes. He made her a preſent of a pearl that coſt him one hundred and fifty thouſand crowns; and there was no body at Rome that did not look upon Brutus as the fruits of their amours, and yet he made no ſcruple to conſpire againſt Cæſar. Some there are, who excuſe him on account of his great zeal for the liberties of his country, which Cæſar had encroached upon; but this has not been able to juſtify him to all the world. And the author of the diſtich, that is to be ſeen under a buſt of Brutus in the great duke's gallery at Florence, did not approve of that action. This buſt is the workmanſhip of the famous Michael Angelo, who did not live to finiſh it, which gave occaſion to a poet to put theſe two verſes.

" Dum Bruti effigiem ſculptor de marmore ducit,
" In mentem ſceleris venit, et abſtinuit.

Thus, as an hiſtorian remarks, he, who had filled the world with the blood of others, filled the ſenate-houſe with his own*.

This murder, which threw all the town into confuſion, filled the heart of Calpurnia with inconſolable grief. She paid to the memory of her huſband, that tribute of tears and affliction, which ſhe owed to the merit of ſo great a man; and not content with that, ſhe was reſolved to give publick marks of her eſteem for him, in making his funeral oration, at the tribunal of harangues, which ſhe did, with an eloquence that ſurpriſed all the world. She did not, indeed, attempt to deſtroy herſelf: true tenderneſs and affection not requiring ſuch violent proceedings. Her behaviour was not like that of a woman out of her ſenſes, but her ſincere love and eſteem was not the leſs conſpicuous. She ſufficiently ſhewed, by her manner of bewailing him, that ſhe was convinced nothing could ever make her amends, for her irreparable loſs. She bid adieu to all the pleaſures of life, and paſſed the remainder of her days in mourning and ſorrow, at Marc Antony's houſe, with whom ſhe generouſly divided her treaſures, that he might be enabled to revenge the death of her illuſtrious ſpouſe §.

* Florus, lib. 4. l. 2.

§ Calpurnia's family was exceeding noble and antient. Moſt people reckon Calpus, ſon of Numa Pompilius, among her anceſtors. Ovid affirms it,

" —— nam quid memorare neceſſe eſt,
" Ut Domus à Calpo nomer Calpurnia ducat.

It was divided into two branches, one of which was diſtinguiſhed with the glorious name of Frugi, which is

as much as to ſay, worthy people. As for the ſirname of Piſo, it was common to both. Calpurnius Piſo, father to Calpurnia, was conſul in the ſeven hundredth fifty third year of Rome. Calpurnia delivered up to Marc Antony, all Cæſar's papers and effects. This Calpurnia is different from a Roman lady of the ſame name, who once pleaded her cauſe with ſo much anger and fury, that ſhe gave occaſion for any edict that none of her ſex ſhould ever plead after.

LIVIA,

LIVIA,

Wife of AUGUSTUS.

OF all the Roman empreſſes, Livia may be ſaid to have done the greateſt honour to her dignity, and to have beſt ſupported the character of it. Auguſtus owed a conſiderable part of his glory to her; and not only conſulted her in the moſt important and difficult affairs, but generally took her advice *. She was daughter of Livius Druſus Calidianus, who being of the number of the proſcribed perſons during the furious proceedings of the triumvirate, joined the party of Brutus and Caſſius †, and killed himſelf after the battle of Philippi, that he might not fall into the hands of Marc Antony and Auguſtus.

Livia's family was, without contradiction, one of the moſt illuſtrious of Rome ‡, for her original was more antient than Rome itſelf, and there are none that have made more noiſe in hiſtory, whether we conſider the great men it has produced §, or the affectation of all the Claudian family (except P. Claudius) to take part with the people againſt the ſenate, which people were always treated by the patricians [a] with haughtineſs, contempt, and inſolence.

Calidianus

* Senec. de Clemen. lib. 1. c. 9. † Dio. lib. 48. Vel. Pater. Hiſt. lib. 2. ‡ Plutar. vit. Publicol. § Sueton. in Tiber. c. 1 & 2.

[a] For the better comprehending what is meant by patricians, it muſt be obſerved, that Romulus ſingled out thoſe of the beſt faſhion at Rome, and ſeparated them from the others. As they were the moſt conſi-

Calidianus was deſcended from this Claudian family; for it was only by adoption * that he belonged to that of the Livians, from whence he took the name of Livius, and his daughter that of Livia.

To her high quality, Livia joined † a beauty which ſurpaſſed that of all the other ladies in Rome. Her mind was vaſt, elevated, cultivated with a prodigious ſtock of learning, and capable of the greateſt things. She diſcerned juſtly ‡, had a gaiety of temper that was charming and lively, and a profound penetration, which, in the moſt intricate affairs, gave her ſo happy a facility in chuſing the beſt method, that afterwards, § Auguſtus never had any ſerious diſcourſe with her, that he did not inſert in his journal. But then ſhe was haughty, ‖ proud, ambitious, and had in ſhort that diſdainful air ſo natural to the Claudian family. She had not, for all that, a forbidding way; and though ſhe valued herſelf upon the antient ſeverity of manners, ſhe knew how to ſoften it §§ by an affable behaviour, and a

* Tacit. Ann. 5. c. 1. † Vell. Pater. Hiſtor. lib. 2. ‡ Macrob. lib. 2. c. 5. § Senec. de Clement. lib. 1. c. 9. ‖ Sueton. in Aug. §§ Tacit. Ann. 5. c. 1.

derable in point of riches, prudence, and wiſdom, he diſtinguiſhed them with the venerable name of fathers, and the reſt were only called the people. The poſterity of theſe fathers were called patricians; and Romulus choſe one hundred of them, whereof he formed the ſenate. From among the other families, as well patricians as plebeians, he took three hundred more, of which he compoſed a body of citizens between the patricians and the people, which was ſtyled the order of knights; ſo that every Roman was either a ſenator, a knight, or a plebeian.

a certain liberty that would not have been permitted to the women of Rome at the beginning.

Such was Livia, who was married to Tiberius Claudius Nero, (alſo of the Claudian family) a man of extraordinary experience, and ſo brave, that Julius Cæſar, who knew how to diſtinguiſh true merit, honoured * Tiberius with the pontificate [b]: he alſo committed to his conduct the colonies which he ſent to Arles, Narbonne, and other towns of Gaul, to reward the important ſervices † he had done the republick when he commanded the fleet in the war of Alexandria, which was concluded by the important victory that Cæſar gained, and to which Tiberius Nero did not a little contribute.

This marriage was ſoon fruitful: Livia became with-child, which gave her a joy that nothing could equal, but the fear ſhe was in of not having a ſon, which ſhe wiſhed for with that ardent paſſion, ſo natural to young married women.

* Vell. Pater. Hiſt. lib. 2. † Suet. in Tiber. c. 4.

[b] The pontificate was one of the fineſt employments at Rome. The pontiffs were eſtabliſhed by king Numa Pompilius to preſide at the publick ceremonies: they took cognizance of every thing that regarded religion and the worſhip of the gods, as well as the ſafety, liberty, and fortune of the citizens. At the beginning of their inſtitution they were but four, and were taken out of the order of patricians. Afterwards four others were added, and choſen from among the knights; and Sylla, at laſt, increaſed the number to fifteen, which body was called the college of pontiffs, over which the chief preſided, and was ſtiled the ſovereign pontiff. As many and great privileges were annexed to this dignity, great pains were taken to obtain it. The emperors did not think it below them to take poſſeſſion, and even to be proud, of this employment; but Theodoſius thought proper to aboliſh it.

men. There was nothing which ſhe did not do to be informed whether her deſires ſhould be accompliſhed. This curioſity was pardonable at her age; and it is reported, that ſhe took it in her head to have an egg from under a ſitting hen*, and that by dint of holding it cloſe in her hand, or in her boſom, ſhe warmed it ſo as to hatch it, and it produced a chicken with a remarkable comb, which ſhe looked upon as ominous, and foretold a ſon. The event anſwered her expectations. She was delivered of Tiberius Claudius Nero, who in his childhood was expoſed to many hardſhips and misfortunes. As this part of the hiſtory is neceſſary to explain that of Livia, it will not be amiſs to be as particular in it as poſſible.

After Julius Cæſar was aſſaſſinated in full ſenate, as we have related, people flattered themſelves that Rome † would find the end of her ſlavery in the death of her tyrant, and that the republick would ſee her liberty ſpring up again after the deſtruction of her oppreſſors. But this murder proved, on the contrary, only the ſeed of endleſs diſcords and diviſions, and the occaſion of the moſt cruel civil wars. Empires have, without doubt, their fates and periods as well as men. Rome was got up to her utmoſt pitch of glory and grandeur; and, according to the viciſſitudes of all human affairs, could not but fall back again to her primitive condition, and be again fettered with thoſe chains which ſhe imagined ſhe had ſo happily ſhook off. Marc Antony, (general of the army under Julius Cæſar) and Octavius Cæſar, Julius's nephew and adopted ſon, (ſince known by the name of Auguſtus) were both reſolved to revenge his death, but each from

* Plin. lib. 10. c. 55. Suet. in Tiber. † Florus, lib. 4.

from different motives, in appearance, though tending to the ſame end, viz. the gratifying of their ambition. Marc Antony was then conſul, which gave him an abſolute authority. His family were poſſeſſed of the moſt important employments; and his two brothers were, the one tribune, and the other prætor. Puffed up with this exorbitant power, he thought he had a right to pretend to every thing; and, in conſequence of this boundleſs preſumption, he demanded the government of [c] Ciſalpine Gaul, which had been given by Cæſar to Decimus Brutus, who was afterwards one of his murderers.

Antony did not find it ſo eaſy a matter to obtain, as he imagined. The ſenate dreaded his ambition, and did not care to increaſe it, by giving him ſo important an employ; beſides, Brutus was looked upon as one of the defenders of the publick liberty. It was not forgot, that the antient freedom of Rome was in a great meaſure owing to one of his anceſtors [d]; and that an ardent love for the republick was in a manner hereditary

[c] Ciſalpine Gaul was what we now call Lombardy, a part of Italy between the Alps and the Appenine mountains, on both ſides the river Po.

[d] Junius Brutus, ſon of Tarquinia, ſiſter to Tarquin the proud, perceiving that this cruel prince put to death the principal perſons of Rome, from whom he imagined he had a great deal to fear, pretended to be mad, to make himſelf contemptible, and that he might not give jealouſy to that ſuſpicious tyrant. It ſoon appeared, however, that Junius, under this pretended diſorder of the brain, concealed the moſt profound prudence. Titus and Aruns, the king's ſons, conſulting the oracle at Delphos, by order of their father, on account of a prodigy that had lately happened at Rome, would needs take their couſin Junius with them, to make ſport of. After they had made their demand of the oracle

hereditary in his family, it was not therefore reaſonable to ſtrip Brutus of his government, in order to give it to Antony. This was done notwithſtanding;

oracle about the prodigy, they aſked which of them ſhould rule after Tarquin? The oracle anſwered, that it ſhould be the firſt among them that ſhould give a kiſs to his mother. The two princes imagining that this could only regard them, agreed to caſt lots which of them ſhould firſt kiſs their mother. Brutus had more ſenſe than to interpret the oracle literally, and ſoon comprehended, that there was ſomething myſterious in it; ſo pretending to fall, he kiſſed the earth, which is the common mother of all men. The oracle was verified. Sextus Tarquinius, another of the king's ſons, having brutally attempted to defile the bed of the ſenator Collatinus, in endeavouring to raviſh his wife Lucretia, this ſcandalous enterprize ſo provoked the Romans, that they took arms, under the conduct of Brutus, who encouraged them, to revenge the outrage; and made them take an oath, that they would be no longer ſubject to kings. In effect, they drove Tarquin and his family out of Rome, and placed the ſovereign power in the hands of two magiſtrates, whom they called conſuls. Brutus was the firſt they pitched upon for this high dignity, and ſhewed, by his behaviour, that they were not deceived in the choice they had made; and that nobody could be properer than he to defend that liberty which he was the author of. He ſuſtained the intereſts of the republick which ſo much zeal, made the people ſo ſenſible of the advantages and ſweetneſs of independency, and gave ſo many proofs of his affection to his country, that after his death the Roman ladies went into deep mourning for a year, and a ſtatue was erected to his honour in the capitol. His memory was always held in veneration at Rome, and the origin of the republick was looked upon as his work; for which reaſon, when Julius Cæſar had made himſelf abſolute, they found one day, wrote under Brutus's ſtatue, theſe words, viz. O that it were the will of the Gods that thou wert alive!

withſtanding; but it was at the requeſt of Auguſtus, whom the ſenate had no mind to diſoblige by the refuſal of the firſt favour he aſked.

Marc Antony lying under ſuch obligations, it might be ſuppoſed, that he would expreſs all poſſible marks of gratitude to Auguſtus his benefactor, but other conſiderations took place; for being*full of reſentment that Julius Cæſar had made Auguſtus his principal heir, to his prejudice, he was reſolved to thwart him in all his projects; to give a malicious turn to his deſigns, in order to make his actions ſuſpected; † and, the more effectually to make him odious, and ruin him with the ſenate, he accuſed him of heinous crimes; and went ſo far as to affirm, that Auguſtus had a mind to aſſaſſinate him ‖.

Theſe bad practices of Antony were too notorious to be hid from Auguſtus, who, though very young, knew that it ſtood him upon to be continually on his guard againſt a man he had ſo much reaſon to miſtruſt; and not doubting but Antony was the perſon in the world he had moſt reaſon to dread and be apprehenſive of, he broke off all commerce with him; and that he might not be in a capacity to hurt him, he was determined to ruin his party. To this purpoſe, conſidering that the government of Ciſalpine Gaul furniſhed great power and advantages to whoever ſhould be in poſſeſſion of it, and that it was of the greateſt importance to him to diſappoint Antony in that reſpect, (though it was he that procured him the employment) reſolved to make Brutus his friend, who was yet in his government: he ſent him word then not to quit nor yield it up to Antony; and that Brutus might put an intire confidence in him, he ſent him proviſions and ammunition to Modena, whither

* Florus, lib. 4. † Vell. Pater. Hiſt. lib. 2.
‖ Sueton. in Aug.

whither he was retired, and alſo aſſiſted him with men and money; deferring, till another opportunity, the revenging of Cæſar's murder.

Marc Antony's year of conſulſhip being over, the ſenate aſſembled to create new conſuls, and to deliberate about the precautions that were thought neceſſary to be taken againſt the boundleſs ambition of this man, with whom they were not at all ſatisfied, no more than with Dolabella his collegue. The famous orator Cicero, who, without doubt, was the firſt in reputation and authority in the ſenate, having lately quarrelled with Antony, declaimed vehemently againſt him. Never was his eloquence employed with more art or ſucceſs. Being ſupported by the friendſhip of Auguſtus, who had committed his intereſts to his care, and whoſe arms and credit gave him courage, he drew Antony's * picture with ſo much artifice, and ſo cunningly exaggerated his vices and ambition, that the ſenate imagined they ſaw in him a mixture of all ſorts of crimes. Never did Cicero ſo advantageouſly make uſe of his art of perſuading; for, after having cenſured the life, and expoſed all the actions of Antony, he clearly convinced the ſenate, that the † bad effects and conſequences already produced by his ambition, were but fore-runners of what was to be expected; ſo that Antony was declared an enemy to the ſtate by a decree, that frightened him ſo much, that he was obliged to get away from Rome, where he thought he could no longer remain in ſafety.

Antony did not want friends who endeavoured to juſtify him of the faults he was accuſed of, but their efforts were in vain. The eloquence of Cicero was victorious ‖. The ſenate, prejudiced

* Philippic. 2. † Eutrop. de geſtis Roman.
‖ Vell. Pater. Dio.

diced againſt Antony, commanded him to lay down his arms; * and upon his refuſing, Auguſtus, together with the conſuls Hirtius and Panſa, had orders to go and fight him before Modena, which he had beſieged. The good cauſe triumphed. Antony's army was beaten, and he was obliged to depend on a ſhameful flight for his ſafety. The ſiege was raiſed, and the ſenate had nothing to regret but the loſs of the two conſuls, who were ſnatched out of the arms of victory, and, after having well performed their duty, both periſhed in the battle. The manner of their death was variouſly reported [e].

Auguſtus did not reap from this victory all the fruit that he expected. The partiſans of Pompey, who were very numerous, took freſh courage upon Antony's being worſted: they hated Antony, becauſe he had much contributed to the ruin of Pompey the Great: but Auguſtus was not leſs odious to them; for as he was adopted ſon and heir to Julius Cæſar, they ſaw plainly, that he could not chuſe but be any ennemy to Pompey's poſterity; they therefore united to make him loſe the reward of his labours, and found many ſpecious

* Appian. Flor. Sueton.

[e] After the battle of Modena it was ſaid at Rome, that Auguſtus cauſed the two conſuls to be killed, that he might be ſole maſter of the armies. Penſa's death eſpecially looked ſo ſuſpicious, that Glycon the phyſician was arreſted, by order of the ſenate, it being ſuppoſed that he had poiſoned the conſul's wounds to pleaſe Auguſtus. Several were of opinion, that Auguſtus himſelf killed Hirtius in the heat of the fight: and if there were ſome who maintained that Auguſtus was incapable of ſo infamous an action, there were not wanting others who affirmed, that every thing was to be feared from ſo ambitious a man, and one who had ſuch vaſt deſigns.

cious reaſons for ſo doing; eſpecially their ſeeming zeal for the publick welfare, ſerved to cloak their private reſentment. They ſhewed the danger of exalting too high, a man, who might one day make himſelf maſter of the republick; that Auguſtus, under pretence of defending Rome, aimed at nothing but arbitrary power; and that if the ſenate knew its own true intereſts, it would be always upon its guard againſt him, as he was not leſs heir to Cæſar's ambition, than to his wealth. Theſe remonſtrances had ſuch an effect, that the honour of a triumph was decreed to Brutus, without mentioning Auguſtus, to whom they alſo refuſed the conſulſhip, though he afterwards obtained it by Cicero's aſſiſtance.

Auguſtus was very much ſurprized to find the high expectations his victory had given him ſo cruelly diſappointed. He accuſed the ſenate of ingratitude; and ſaid, that Brutus had been only a calm ſpectator of the battle, whilſt he, on the contrary, had expoſed his life as much as the meaneſt ſoldier, and yet they had thought proper to rob him of the honour that was due to him, to beſtow it upon Brutus. Theſe proceedings filled him with indignation againſt the ſenate, and he was reſolved to be revenged for ſo cruel a piece of injuſtice.

He was in this ſituation when Lepidus (into whoſe army Antony had retired after the above mentioned battle) being deſirous to take advantage of the humour he ſaw Auguſtus was in, inſinuated to him, that he ought not to put too much confidence in the ſenate, who were intirely devoted to Pompey's friends, and whoſe memory was yet very dear to them; that he ought rather to think of revenging the death of his father, than favour thoſe who had aſſaſſinated him: and ſeeing that theſe arguments made an impreſſion on him,

he

he propoſed, that he ſhould be*friends with Antony; and that they three might be cloſely united together, in order to be revenged on their reſpective enemies.

Auguſtus found his advantage and ſatisfaction in this propoſal. Lepidus (diſtinguiſhed by his birth, his victories, and his immenſe riches, which had made him formidable to the ſenate) had the command of a great army, and could turn the ſcale in favour of whatever party he eſpouſed. Auguſtus perceived, that by making peace, he might have the uſe of that general's forces, as well as thoſe of Antony, to mortify the ſenate, who, he ſaid, had uſed him ſo ill: in ſhort, he was not maſter of either troops or authority enough to compaſs his deſigns alone, and therefore could not avoid having recourſe to the aſſiſtance of others. He accommodated himſelf then to the times, and his own neceſſity; and pretending to bury in oblivion the ill treatment he had received from Antony, he offered to make up matters with him, and the conditions were ſoon agreed upon. Lepidus, Marc Antony, and Auguſtus, met in an iſland between Perouſe and Bolognia[f]; they embraced, and making each other the ſtrongeſt proteſtations

* Vell. Pater. Hiſt. lib. 2.

[f] The river Labiena, in the Modeneſe, between Perouſe and Bolognia, forms a little iſland, which Lepidus pitched upon for the interview between Antony and Auguſtus. When they three approached the iſland, Lepidus, who was the mediator, and in whoſe probity the others had great confidence, went alone to viſit the iſland, and examine whether there might not be ſome ſoldiers concealed, that there might be no room for ſuſpicion, Antony keeping on one ſide the river, and Auguſtus on the other, each being accompanied by five legions under arms. Lepidus having ſtrictly ſearched every corner of the iſland, made a ſignal to the two generals

proteſtations of a ſincere friendſhip, they formed that famous triumvirate that filled Rome with blood. Every ſentence of this fatal agreement carried death and deſtruction along with it. It was reſolved, that they three ſhould take upon them the government of the republick with ſovereign authority; that there ſhould be no more conſuls; that they alone ſhould diſpoſe of every thing; that they ſhould divide among them the provinces, and the legions; that they ſhould make war againſt Caſſius and Brutus; and that they ſhould deliver up to each other their reſpective enemies, in order to take a cruel vengeance of all ſuch as they imagined had injured them: and to make this reconciliation more ſincere, and the union more durable, it was determined, that Auguſtus ſhould marry Clodia, Antony's daughter-in-law, whom Fulvia had by Claudius her firſt huſband.

This monſtrous project being thus concerted, the bloody catalogue of perſons who were condemned to death was fixed up at Rome, in large characters, the number of which increaſed every day; and thoſe who thought themſelves very happy, when they found no mention made of their

generals that they might ſafely paſs, by lifting up his robe, which was the ſign agreed on. Immediately Auguſtus and Antony, leaving their followers at the ends of the bridge made for the communication, advanced ſingly, and with an equal pace, to the middle of the iſland, where they met; and that there might be no jealouſy between them, they ſearched each other, for fear of arms being concealed; and after having embraced, they three ſat down in an open place, where they might be ſeen by their people. Auguſtus, being conſul, placed himſelf in the middle between Lepidus and Antony. Their conference continued three days; and the triumvirate was the dreadful reſult of it.

their names in the liſt, learnt next day by their death, that they had been added. Every body's life depended on the whims and caprice of theſe barbarians; and thoſe dignities, which till then had been ſacred and inviolable, were no protection at all to the poſſeſſors of them. Conſuls, prætors, and tribunes, might be ſeen upon their knees, at the feet of their ſlaves, ſupplicating them not to declare the places where they ſhould hide themſelves. It was forbid on pain of death to give protection to any that were condemned, or even to mourn for them. It was a capital crime to ſhew the leaſt ſigns of pity; for a ſigh or a tear was an offence not to be forgiven. In ſhort, things were come to that degree of miſery, that it was looked upon as a miracle of good fortune to eſcape the fury of theſe three tyrants.

Never was the appearance of Rome ſo horrible; nothing was to be ſeen but trouble and confuſion; and nothing ſpoke of but puniſhments, death, and bloody executions, the like of which, till then, Rome had never been the theatre of, except during the horrible proſcriptions of Sylla and Marius. Above one hundred and forty ſenators, and two thouſand knights, were maſſacred. Neither age, relationſhip, innocence, virtue, nor friendſhip, were ſpared. No ſtate or condition was exempt from the fury of theſe three monſters. The ties of blood were of no weight with them, whoſe inſatiable deſire of revenge got the better of nature, and all other conſiderations; witneſs the proſcription of Lucius Cæſar, uncle to Marc Antony; Lucius Paulus, brother to Lepidus; and Toranius, Auguſtus's tutor; and if they were not put to death, it was owing to the reſpect which the inſtruments of theſe cruelties (employed by the triumvirate) had for theſe great men. Never had Rome more juſt, or more melancholy cauſe of affliction.

affliction. The ſtreets were choaked up with the dead bodies of the moſt illuſtrious citizens; nor was there any family of diſtinction in which theſe tyrants had not marked out their hatred and cruelty in characters of blood. Every day the tribunal of harangues was loaded with the heads of the moſt conſiderable Romans.

But the moſt moving and deplorable ſpectacle of all was to ſee, in the ſame place, the head of Cicero*, the moſt eloquent orator that ever was, and the moſt zealous defender of the publick liberties. He fell a ſacrifice to the hatred of Antony†, againſt whom he had ſo often declaimed in the ſenate with irreſiſtible force: and this triumvir was not aſhamed to purchaſe the death of his enemy, at the expence of his own blood; for he ſacrificed his uncle to Auguſtus's reſentment, and exchanged his head againſt that of Cicero. Never did a man ſhed the blood of an enemy with ſo much pleaſure; for Antony would have returned from the gaining of the moſt important victory with leſs pride and ſatisfaction, than he had upon this occaſion; and could not poſſibly expreſs the joy he conceived at the death of this formidable adverſary more, than by the pleaſure he took in earneſtly contemplating the head, which he cauſed to be brought to him for that purpoſe, and that he might be ſure of its being the head of Cicero. Neither would Fulvia be deprived of the pleaſure of feaſting her eyes with this diſmal ſight. As this was the firſt opportunity ſhe ever had of being revenged of him, whoſe vehement invectives had ſo often provoked her, ſhe took into her hands this head, ſo venerable even in death, and after having vomited againſt it a torrent of injurious words, ſhe gave herſelf

* Vell. Paterc. Hiſtor. lib. 2. † Florus, lib. 4.

herſelf the baſe and malicious ſatisfaction of piercing, with the bodkin of her hair, that tongue which had ſo often thundered in the ſenate againſt her huſband, and ſometimes againſt her [g] brutal pleaſure! which was afterwards imitated * by an inceſtuous princeſs upon the tongue of the greateſt among

* Hieron. adverſ. Rufin.

[g] Cicero's proſcription was the point that was moſt of all conteſted among the triumvirs. Antony would hear of no accomodation, if the death of this orator was not granted him. Lepidus was well enough pleaſed, but Auguſtus would by no means conſent to it; he even held out the two firſt days, but the third he demanded in return the head of Lucius Cæſar, uncle to Antony, taking it for granted, that Antony would no longer inſiſt upon the deſtruction of Cicero; but Antony took him at his word, and gave up his uncle to procure to himſelf that ineſtimable pleaſure. Lucius, who was with his brother Quintius Cicero at his country houſe near Tuſculum, being informed of this, ſet out for Macedonia, to go to Brutus, and took his brother with him. But as they departed in great haſte, they forgot to take money for their journey, ſo that Cicero having but little about him, and Quintius none at all, the latter went home to get ſome; but being betrayed by his own ſervants, he was killed, together with his ſon. Cicero embarked for his voyage, and was ſome days at ſea; but whether that element did not agree with him, or that he always hoped Auguſtus, whom he had ſo much obliged, would never abandon him, he cauſed himſelf to be put on ſhore, and travelled towards Rome, heſitating how to diſpoſe of himſelf; for ſometimes he had thoughts of going privately to Cæſar, and of killing himſelf at his feet; but afterwards changing his mind, he went again on board the ſhip, in order to go to another country houſe which he had near Gayetta. He ſtayed there but one night, becauſe his domeſticks, not thinking him ſafe, prevailed on him to leave that place, and embark again. His litter

among the children of men *. Theſe bloody proceedings diſpeopled Rome, for every body fled as faſt as they could, and, among the reſt, Calidianus, Livia's father, who went to join Brutus and Caſſius; but that proved no place of ſafety to him, for the triumvirs attacked them in the provinces whither they had retired, and were ſo fortunate as to ruin them beyond all poſſibility of a recovery at the famous battle of Philippi: theſe two were called the laſt of the Romans.

This victory might be reckoned the expiration of the republick, for all hope of liberty vaniſhed with the two generals, who had undertaken to defend it; and the laſt day of Brutus might be reckoned the firſt of Rome's ſlavery. Auguſtus went thither as ſoon as he had made a new diviſion with Antony; for Lepidus, with whom they had fallen out, had no part in it; Antony went into

* St. John Baptiſt.

was not two miles from the houſe, when people, who were ſent by Antony, arrived there, conducted by Herennius, and Popilius Lena the centurion, whom Cicero had defended in a proſecution for a murder, which would have coſt him his life, if it had not been for the eloquence and protection of that orator. None of the ſervants would tell where Cicero was; and the aſſaſſins might not have found him, if Philologus, Quintius's freeman, and whom Cicero himſelf inſtructed in learning, had not betrayed his benefactor, by diſcovering the ſecret of his journey, and the road he took. Theſe wretches had not far to go before they overtook him. Cicero hearing the noiſe of their horſes, ſtopped his ſervants, and putting his head out of the litter, Herennius had the cruelty to cut it off, as alſo both his hands, whilſt the reſt of the aſſaſſins ſhut their eyes, that they might not be witneſſes of ſo horrible an execution. As ſoon as Antony ſaw Cicero's head, he ſaid, he had then done with the proſcriptions, for that his vengeance was fully ſatisfied.

into Aſia to keep the provinces in obedience, and puniſh the kings who had taken part with the enemies of Rome.

Being now ſeparated by ſo many ſeas and nations, it might be ſuppoſed they were in no danger of giving each other any reaſons of jealouſy and diſcontent; but peace can never long continue between two ambitious perſons. The ardent deſire they both had to govern without a competitor, preſently gave occaſion for a new rupture. Auguſtus, who carried his views very far, could bear no rival; and Antony would be ſole maſter; as if the whole world were too little to ſatisfy the deſires of two men. Their jealouſy increaſed with their ambition; it ſoon degenerated into hatred, and they only waited for a fair opportunity to declare war.

Fulvia, Marc Antony's wife, was the firebrand that ſoon kindled it up. She was perfectly well informed of the violent paſſion her huſband had conceived for Cleopatra queen of Egypt,[h] whoſe admirable beauty was ſo much extolled; and conceived ſuch a jealouſy as ſoon

[h] Cleopatra queen of Egypt was reckoned one of the moſt accompliſhed beauties in the world; ſhe had a wonderful talent at making herſelf beloved, when ſhe had a mind to diſplay it. Julius Cæſar was ſmitten with her irreſiſtible charms, and had a ſon by her, whom he called Cæſarion. The eldeſt ſon of Pompey the Great was alſo proud of her chains. Marc Antony was rather bewitched than in love with her, and it may well be ſaid, that it coſt him the empire and his life. It is reported, that Cleopatra never really loved any of theſe great men, and that ſhe never had a ſincere affection for any but Dellius, who was Antony's confident. Cleopatra had a ſon and a daughter by Antony; the former was called the Sun, and the other the Moon.

deprived her of her reſt, and afterwards of her reaſon. She was not a woman to ſuffer patiently an affront of that nature, and therefore, without the leaſt heſitation, reſolved to puniſh her huſband by being as unfaithful to him as ſhe imagined he was to her. This was indeed carrying her reſentment a great way; but Fulvia, the moſt proud and impetuous of women, was a ſtranger to moderation in hatred and revenge.

Auguſtus then was the perſon ſhe pitched upon to make repriſals with, and without reflecting on the conſequences, let him know the whole violence of her paſſion; and that her revenge might not ſleep any longer, ſhe thought proper to ſpare him the trouble of taking ſuch ſteps as decency ſeemed to require. But what ſhame and mortification was it for the wife of Antony to find herſelf deſpiſed by Auguſtus, (who without doubt was otherwiſe employed) and who was not content with that, but added the moſt provoking inſults and railleries, ſo that ſhe became the ſubject of every body's malicious wit. And that ſhe might not imagine his ſlighting her proceeded from any ſcruples on account of his having married Claudia her daughter, he ſent her back to her mother, proteſting that ſhe was as good a virgin as when he firſt ſaw her; and ſoon after married Scribonia, daughter of Scribonius Libo, and widow of two conſuls.

It is eaſy to conceive the rage Fulvia was in when ſhe reflected upon the ſteps ſhe had taken and the diſagreeable conſequences of them. Her love gave way to her fury, and ſhe breathed nothing but revenge. She ſwore the deſtruction of Auguſtus, and longed for nothing ſo much as an opportunity to accompliſh it. She knew Antony was plunged into the delights and pleaſures of Egypt, and thought there could be no ſure method

ethod of tearing him from the arms of Cleo-
atra than by promoting a war between Auguſtus
nd him. It was not long before Auguſtus fur-
iſhed her with a pretence for it. He had ſome
me before a mind to diſtribute among his legi-
ns, by way of reward for their ſervices, certain
nds that he had promiſed them; Fulvia oppoſed
, for fear this bounty ſhould alienate the ſoldi-
rs from Antony, * pretending that this di-
ribution could not be made without her huſ-
nd's conſent, and that they ſhould wait for his
turn: Auguſtus, whether it was that he would
ot be the cauſe of their falling out, or on ac-
unt of his complaiſance for Fulvia, † left
ings as they were, and amuſed the troops with
ir words; but when once he had broke with
ulvia, he kept no meaſures with her, on the
ntrary he gave immediate ſatisfaction to the le-
ons.

This was the ſignal for war: Fulvia who had
ide, obſtinacy and paſſion in abundance, and
ing in the higheſt degree exaſperated againſt
uguſtus, ‡ filled Rome with trouble and confu-
n ‖. She obliged Lucius Antonius, her brother-
-law, and all her huſband's friends, to take up
ms; every thing was in motion, and the town
vided into factions; and becauſe Auguſtus's
rty was the ſtrongeſt, (the chief being preſent)
ntony's friends quitted Rome, and joined
emſelves to Lucius Antonius who had retired
Perouſe. Tiberius Nero went thither with
e reſt; but ſeeing that Auguſtus carried terror
rough all Italy, he left it ſuddenly and went to
n Antony near Sicily.

His wife Livia accompanied him in his jour-
y, or rather his flight, which was followed

* Sueton. in Aug. Dio. lib. 48.

† Vell. Pater. Hiſtor. lib. 2.

‖ Sueton. in Aug.

with many dangers and misfortunes; for Auguſtus's troops, being diſperſed throughout all the neighbourhood of Rome, and being informed of Tiberius's eſcape, ſearched for him with the utmoſt diligence, to ſacrifice him to the wrath of their general. And they purſued him ſo cloſe, that they could not have failed to overtake him near Naples, were it not for the darkneſs of the night, and his quitting the high road, with his wife and their little ſon Tiberius, and travelling in ways that were unknown and difficult. This was not the only riſque they run in their haſty and troubleſome flight, for after having been in great danger at ſea, and wandering about in Sicily and Achaia, they carried their child into Lacedemonia, * (which was under the protection of ſome of the Claudian family) and which however they were forced to leave very ſuddenly in the night, paſſing through dreadful and dangerous foreſts, out of which flames iſſued in abundance, and ſurrounded in ſuch a manner this little fugitive company, that the fire caught hold of Livia's hair and robe, but did not damage either her or the child ſhe had in her arms. ‡ This paſſage has cauſed hiſtorians to make many reflections on the viciſſitudes of fortune, whoſe ſurprizing turns and changes are ſuch, as ſhould make us not be ſurprized when matters happen quite contrary to our ſchemes and deſigns: for Livia was obliged to travel over ſo many countries, and undergo ſo many dangers and hardſhips to avoid him who was ſoon to be her huſband, and the ſoldiers were indefatigable to find out, and take away the life of him who was one day to be abſolute maſter of theirs.

* Sueton. in Tib. 2. Dio. lib. 18.

‡ Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib.

In the mean time Fulvia died in the eaſt, whither ſhe had gone like one of the furies to rouze up Antony from his lethargy; and as ſhe had been the occaſion of the war, the friends of Cæſar and Antony had no great difficulty to make peace between them, when ſhe was no longer in the way [1]. To make it more ſolid and durable, the intereſts of young Pompey were taken into conſideration at the ſame time, and every thing managed to the ſatisfaction of all parties. This reconciliation was cemented by the marriage of Octavia (ſiſter to Auguſtus, and widow of Marcellus) to Antony, which was celebrated at Rome with great pomp and magnificence. Nothing was omitted that could induce the people to forget their paſt calamities. All ſorts of ſhews, feaſts, and diverſions, were the conſequences of this peace. All thoſe who had fled from Rome returned thither in ſafety, and Tiberius Nero alſo brought back his wife Livia.

[1] When Fulvia was dead, the breach between Cæſar and Antony was made up, by the mediation of Mecænas on one ſide, and of Cocceius Nerva, and Fonteius, on the other. The rendezvous of theſe mediators was at Terracina; the famous poet Horace, who was going to Brundiſium, happened to be there at that time*; we ſhall take an opportunity to mention who Mecænas was. As for Cocceius, (ſirnamed Nerva,) he was a famous lawyer, of a very noble family, for it is ſaid that Nerva, who was emperor after Domitian, deſcended from him. He was always much eſteemed by Auguſtus. Fonteius Capito was Antony's greateſt friend: he was reckoned the moſt polite Roman of his time. Both of them were men of ſo great probity, that they were frequently employed as mediators to reconcile differences.

Averſos ſoliti componere amicos.

* Sat. 5. lib. 1.

She was then in the height of her beauty, to which was added a wit and vivacity, that made her the very life and ſoul of all companies where ſhe happened to be. She had alſo the moſt winning and inſinuating manner in the world, which was natural to her. One might ſee in her a noble ſort of haughtineſs, which ſhe knew how to civilize and ſoften upon occaſion, and could adapt it to the character of the perſon ſhe converſed with. All theſe qualities, which were not to be met with but in Livia, ſoon made Auguſtus very ſenſible of her merit. It was preſently perceived, by the attachment and complaiſance he had for her, and the famous entertainment ‖ he gave his friends the firſt time he was ſhaved, was attributed to this new paſſion of his: he was ever after very careful to keep himſelf cloſe ſhaved, in order to be agreeable to his new miſtreſs [k].

It is very probable that Livia did not long ſuffer Auguſtus to languiſh, whatever a certain hiſtorian has been pleaſed to ſay on that ſubject *. It is even reported, that ſhe ſoon gave him undoubted marks of her affection: She was extreamly ambitious,

‖ Dio. lib. 58. * Tacit. Ann. 5. c. 1.

[k] The Romans were uſed to make a great feaſt the firſt time they ſhaved themſelves. Theſe feaſts were called Barbatoria, and were ſolemnized by a ſumptuous dinner, which they gave their friends: they preſerved with a great deal of ſuperſtition this firſt beard. We read, that Nero preſerved his very carefully in a gold box, and dedicated it to Jupiter in the Capitol. Moſt commonly they cauſed themſelves to be ſhaved for the firſt time, the day they put on their manly robe, but ſometimes later.

Uno atque eodem die togam ſumpſit, barbamque depoſuit. Suet. in Cai.

bitious, and the indifferent circumſtances of Tiberius were not capable of gratifying her vanity. Cæſar Auguſtus, on the contrary, ſaw nothing above him, and did not deſpair of getting rid of his only rival one way or other, and ſo increaſe and eſtabliſh his power, which was already little leſs than abſolute *. Beſides, Cæſar had accompliſhments that were not eaſy to be reſiſted ‖. He was extraordinary handſome, of a middle ſize indeed, but ſo well proportioned that he did not ſeem little, § but when compared to a taller man †. He was then in the prime of his youth, his hair fair, and in natural buckles, a Roman noſe, and eyes ſo brilliant and ſparkling, that it was very difficult to bear the luſtre of them, or look earneſtly at him without being dazzled, as a ſoldier told him one day; in his countenance ſhone a certain majeſty mixed with ſweetneſs, which beſpoke the reſpect of all that ſaw him; the beauties of his mind were anſwerable to thoſe of his perſon; he was of a delightful and affable temper, and lively converſation; polite in his manners and diſcourſe, and conſtant in his friendſhips. With all theſe advantages, it was not poſſible for Livia to remain long in doubt whether ſhe ſhould be favourable to him or not. She liſtened then to Cæſar; and the charms which he found in her, made the odd and gloomy temper of Scribonia appear inſupportable to him, for he was already very much diſguſted at her, on account of her paſſions and jealouſies. He put her away the very day ſhe was brought to bed of Julia. And making uſe of his power to ſecond his inclinations, he entreated Tiberius Nero to yield him his wife.

* Sueton. in Aug.
§ Aurel. Victor. Epitom.
‖ Eutrop. de geſt. Rom.
† Dio. lib. 48.

It is not known whether it was with Livia's conſent, but it may eaſily be ſuppoſed, that this ambitious lady was not long deliberating between her duty and her fortune, between Cæſar and Tiberius.

She was then ſix months gone with child, not without well grounded ſuſpicions of being ſo by Auguſtus; and by the laws * women were forbid to marry again, till their huſbands had been ten months dead, and were to ſtay the ſame time after being divorced; to prevent the confuſion † which otherwiſe would be thrown into families by the uncertainty of births. Auguſtus pretended to be mighty ſcrupulous upon this article, for he affected to have great reſpect for the laws ‡. He aſſembled the college of prieſts, to conſult them about this important point, whether he might marry a woman with child; and, making as though he would have nothing to reproach himſelf with, he cauſed Apollo, and the other divinities, to be conſulted. The oracles of the gods, and the deciſion of the pontiffs, were favourable to his inclinations. Thus cured of his ſcruples, and his doubts being removed, he married Livia, to whom he had lately been a bitter enemy, and obliged Tiberius Nero not only to conſent to it, but even to give her as if he had been her father; and celebrated his nuptials with a grand entertainment, to which Tiberius was not the laſt invited.

The comicalneſs of one of thoſe little agreeable pratling boys, which the Roman ladies were ſo fond of, made the company laugh heartily §. The gueſts being placed at table, the child took notice of Livia's being ſeated next to Auguſtus, and Tiberius Nero at the other ſide of the

* Dio. lib. 48. † Senec. de conſolat. ‡ Prudent. § Dio. lib. 48.

the table. Is that your place, madam, ſaid he, ought you not ſit near your own huſband? This ſerved to divert them a great while. When they roſe from table, Auguſtus took Livia home with him.

Three months after, ſhe was brought to bed of a ſon, whom they called Claudius Druſus Nero. Auguſtus ſent it to Tiberius Nero, for he would not keep it at his own houſe, leſt he might be ſuſpected to be the parent; and he cauſed it to be inſerted in his journal, ‖ that his wife Livia, being delivered of a ſon at his houſe, he ſent the child to Tiberius Nero its father. But theſe precautions did not diſſipate the ſuſpicions of the publick, for it was generally believed, that the young Druſus was his; and amongſt other railleries, it was ſaid, that every thing proſpered with fortunate people, for that they could have children in three months *.

This marriage of Auguſtus with Livia, (tho' big with child,) was not however without precedent. † Pompey married Emilia, daughter of Emilius Scaurus, already the wife of another man, and with child. ‡ Cato of Utica, after having had children by Marcia his wife, made no difficulty to yield her up to his friend Hortenſius, who had requeſted that favour of him, and to take her again after the death of that orator. Cato was reproached with having parted with his wife when ſhe was poor, and re-taken her when ſhe was become rich. And even Octavia, ſiſter to Auguſtus, was with child by Marcellus, when Marc Antony married her.

Matters were in this ſituation at Rome, when § Pompey and Auguſtus quarrelling about trifles,

‖ Sueton. in Aug. * Dio. lib. 48. † Plutar. vit. Pom. ‡ Vit. Caton. § Eutrop. de geſt. Rom. lib. 7.

re-plunged the republick into freſh troubles, and a new war, which Auguſtus ‖ conducted with a good deal of imprudence, and therefore was not always ſucceſsful. His fleet was twice very ſeverely handled, which he was obliged to refit with great difficulty and expence. Lepidus, whom he had called in to his aſſiſtance, gave him room to ſuſpect ſome treaſon, and in attempting to guard againſt it, he was twice very near falling into the hands of Pompey's lieutenants. His misfortunes did not end there, for he was beat at ſea, near Sicily, and after ſeeing half his fleet periſh, he was a great while without knowing where to ſhelter himſelf, ſo that he would have been utterly ruined, if the raſh and headſtrong courage of Pompey (elevated by this ſucceſs) had ſuffered him to make the moſt of his advantage.

This bad news threw Livia into great perplexities, and furniſhed her with matter for the moſt ſerious reflections. She knew that the events of war are always doubtful and precarious; that Pompey, with whom fortune ſeemed to be reconciled, was much reſpected at Rome, and in the armies; that Auguſtus could have no dependence on the promiſes of Antony, who was intirely governed by his caprice and amours, and not by his intereſts and his reaſon; that fortune, which hitherto had ſmiled upon Auguſtus, might at laſt turn her back upon him: all theſe conſiderations cauſed her to paſs many a diſagreeable moment. Beſides, * people's minds were diſquieted at Rome by ſeveral prodigies, and extraordinary preſages that had happened lately, ſo that Livia ſtood in great need of the conſolation ſhe received, from an odd affair at a country houſe ſhe had near Rome. An eagle that had ſnatched

‖ Dio. lib. 48. * Sueton. in Galb.

ſnatched up a chicken with a little branch of laurel in its bill, let it drop ſoftly near her. Every body, that imagined they had any ſkill in foretelling events, agreed that this could promiſe nothing leſs to Livia than the ſovereign power; and that the laurel plainly ſignified, the great glory and honour her poſterity ſhould enjoy. This was too flattering a prognoſtick not to be minded; † on the contrary, Livia took all poſſible care of theſe two objects of her hopes. The chicken became ſo fruitful, that the village where it was reared, was called the village of hens; and the laurel, which ſhe cauſed to be planted, was cultivated ſo ſucceſsfully, that in a few years it was big enough to furniſh laurel branches, to crown the conquerors in their triumphs.

Livia in a little time had the pleaſure of ſeeing this prediction beginning to be fulfilled, by the victory that Auguſtus gained over Pompey. For the two fleets met, and the moſt bloody battle enſued that had ever been known. Each fleet was compoſed of almoſt four hundred ſail, and theſe ſhips altogether reſembled a floating city. Agrippa, Auguſtus's admiral, employed all his induſtry, ſkill, and courage, to conquer; and Demochares, Pompey's admiral, (a moſt experienced officer) exhauſted his whole ſtock of knowledge and bravery, to force victory to declare on his ſide. They fought for a long time with equal ſucceſs, and with ſo much obſtinacy and fury, that the armies who were on ſhore perceived the ſea to change colour, being tinged with the blood of an infinite number of ſoldiers, ſome of which were ſwiming about among the waves, and others floating dead on the water, together with pieces of the broken veſſels.

In

† Sueton. in Galb.

It ſeemed as if fortune was in doubt which ſide to declare on, or elſe that ſhe heſitated on purpoſe, to give the two generals an opportunity of diſplaying their valour and abilities, and to make them diſpute the victory with each other.

Auguſtus and Pompey were with their armies on ſhore, anxious ſpectators of the battle, the conſequence of which was to decide their fortune; and waited with the utmoſt impatience to ſee the event of this important action. A profound ſilence was obſerved on both ſides, as long as the victory was doubtful; but Agrippa having the good fortune to ſink ſome of Pompey's ſhips, Auguſtus's ſoldiers were ſo elevated with the ſucceſs, that they made the air ring with their ſhouts, and ſo terrified Pompey's men, that they began to ſtagger. In effect, this accident cauſed ſuch an alteration in the fight, that Pompey's fleet was defeated. Demochares killed himſelf through deſpair, and Pompey only ſurvived him to periſh ſoon after, by the hands of an infamous aſſaſſin, which delivered Auguſtus from this formidable enemy.

Never did a conqueror uſe his victory more cruelly; for as this war had kept him continually in alarms, and the utmoſt uneaſineſs, he ſuffered himſelf to be hurried on by his reſentment, againſt all ſuch ſenators and knights as had taken part with Pompey. He puniſhed them with death, and ſullied his triumph with the blood of the moſt illuſtrious men in the republick. He afterwards gave his troops ſome tokens of his generoſity. And, of all the honours which were decreed him by the ſenate, he only accepted of the privilege which they granted to his wife Livia, and his ſiſter Octavia, to diſpoſe of their effects as they thought proper, and that their perſons ſhould be ſacred and inviolable, like the tribunes.

And after having regulated ſome affairs in Rome, he went to give battle to Marc Anthony, with whom * he had lately fallen out again, and intirely defeated him at the famous battle of Actium, which drove Antony into ſuch deſpair, that he killed himſelf; in which Cleopatra, who was the principal cauſe of his deſtruction, imitated him ſoon after [1].

This

* Sueton. Dio. † Horat. Od. 37. lib. 1.

[1] Cleopatra ſeeing that fortune was favourable to Auguſtus, was the firſt to betray Marc Antony, tho' ſhe was the only cauſe of his misfortune. She ſecretly gave up the town of Peluſium to the conqueror, and made a great many of Antony's ſhips paſs over to his ſide. Antony knew that ſhe was betraying him, but was too much in love to wiſh her any harm, and ſo fell into the ſnare that was laid for him. For Cleopatra flattering herſelf, that ſhe could make Auguſtus ſenſible of her charms, gave out that ſhe had killed herſelf, imagining that Antony would never ſurvive her, and by that ſtratagem, hoped to deliver Auguſtus from his formidable rival. Her artifice ſucceeded: Antony, who was bewitched with Cleopatra, notwithſtanding her treachery and perfidiouſneſs, had no ſooner heard of her death, than he run himſelf through the body with his ſword. But a moment after being informed that ſhe was in good health, he repented of this raſh and fatal action, which was to ſeparate him from the object of his paſſion. He cauſed himſelf to be put into a baſket, and drawn up into the tower where Cleopatra was, and expired in her arms. Cleopatra however, being informed that Auguſtus's fair words and civil treatment tended to her preſervation, only that ſhe might grace his triumph, (which ſhe dreaded more than death) reſolved to live no longer. She dreſſed herſelf in her moſt magnificent apparel, and laid herſelf down upon a ſumptuous bed, where ſhe was found breathleſs. On her arm were perceived little marks, as if it had

been

This victory reſtored peace to the republick, and the ſovereignty of the world to Auguſtus. He returned to Rome, preceded by the report of his victory, and followed by the loud acclamations of the people, loaded with glory and honour. He was received every where, and eſpecially at Rome, with the reſpect that was due to the lord of the whole earth; † and his triumph, the moſt ſuperb that till then had ever been ſeen, laſted three days ſucceſſively, and were paſſed in diverſions, feaſts, ſhews, and rejoycings, which at laſt ſucceeded the rivers of tears that had been ſhed during ſo many civil wars. The ſenate was at a loſs to invent titles of honour and dignities, that could bear any proportion to the greatneſs of Cæſar and his family. He was created conſul, tribune, cenſor; proclaimed father of his country, and grand pontiff. They honoured him § with a new name, and called him Auguſtus, as if he partook of the nature of the gods; which the poets did not ſcruple to attribute to him in their verſes, and which are ſo many ſhameful monuments of their flattery and impiety.

Auguſtus's empire may be ſaid to commence from that time ‡. The town took a new face, and the ſtate quite another form. The republick was changed into a monarchy: Every thing yielded to the new yoke, and thoſe people, who of all others were moſt jealous of their liberties, were reduced to the moſt ſubmiſſive ſervitude. Thoſe

† Sueton. Flor. Dio. & alii. § Horat. Od. 3. lib. 2. ‡ Tacit. Ann. 1.

been the bite of an aſp, or elſe ſhe had done it herſelf with the bodkin of her hair, which ſhe dipt in ſome malignant poiſon.

Thoſe very Romans, who at the beginning of their republick had by a barbarous zeal ſacrificed their own children to its intereſts, * were now making vows for the preſervation of thoſe who had deprived them of that liberty, the defence of which had induced them to become parricides [m].

The ſenate, whoſe decrees were till then ſo much reſpected, now acted only according to the will of the prince; for the paſt miſeries and calamities had deſtroyed all ſuch ſenators as had any zeal for the publick; and none remained but ſome timid magiſtrates, who had not courage enough to ſwim againſt the ſtream. The ſenate was for the moſt part compoſed of young men, who never having experienc'd the ſweets of liberty, were not ſenſible of the yoke they were bringing themſelves under; and conſequently, neither freedom in their votes, nor probity in their deliberations, were any longer to be met with. Juſtice was oppreſſed by fear; the laws loſt their force; the prince was the only oracle conſulted; and the mercenary votes of thoſe ſelf-intereſted magiſtrates, were ſure to be always conformable to the will of the ſovereign, who purchaſed them by rewards, which the ſenators baſely preferred to their honour.

The

* Titus Liv. Florus.

[m] Junius Brutus, of whom we have already made mention, after having drove Tarquin the Proud from Rome, being informed that this prince had ſecret intelligence with ſome of the principal perſons of the town, who were endeavouring to re-eſtabliſh him on the throne, among which, the moſt zealous were Titus and Tiberius his own ſons; he cauſed them to be arreſted, cruelly whipped, and afterwards beheaded in his preſence, to ſhew the people that the love of his country was, in him, ſtronger than nature.

The provinces regulated their conduct by that of Rome, being thoroughly fatigued with ſo many civil wars, and by the rapine and extortions of the governors, who, to enrich themſelves, were continually plundering them. In ſhort, they choſe rather to obey one emperor than the greedy viceroys, which were ſent them by the ſenate. Thus all ſubmitted to the new regulation, without the leaſt reſiſtance; and the diſtant kings ſtrove who ſhould give the greateſt marks of their reſpect for Auguſtus, and endeavoured to merit his favour, by putting themſelves as ſoon as poſſible under his protection.

They erected triumphal arches to his honour, built noble cities, which they dedicated to him, and omitted nothing that could teſtify their profound veneration and dependence. Herod king of Judea [n] was one of the foremoſt in diſplaying his magnificence, and in complimenting Cæſar. This prince (the greateſt politician of his time) had been the moſt zealous of all Antony's friends; and when he was defeated, it was generally thought that Herod's ruin would have followed of courſe, becauſe Auguſtus was extreamly

[n] This was Herod the Great, famous for the cruel maſſacre he made of the Bethlemite children, hoping to include in it the Saviour of the world, whom the magi ſearched for under the title of the king of the Jews, newly born. It is credibly reported, that this inhuman prince ſacrificed his own ſon among the reſt; and that Auguſtus hearing of this butchery, ſaid, that he would rather be Herod's hog than his ſon. This was not the only action of Herod's that Auguſtus diſapproved of: for we read, that this tyrant having one day done ſomething that did not pleaſe Auguſtus, the latter wrote to him, that hitherto he had treated him as a friend, but for the future he would uſe him like a ſubject.

treamly irritated againſt all thoſe who had taken part with his enemy; but the Jewiſh monarch, who on the moſt preſſing occaſions had always the greateſt preſence of mind, knew very well how to extricate himſelf out of this difficulty, and remedy the bad ſtate of his affairs, which his attachment to the intereſts of Antony had undone to all appearance. He went to Rhodes, * where Auguſtus then was, and laying aſide his crown and royal robes, and every thing that favoured of majeſty, except his greatneſs of ſoul, he threw himſelf at the emperor's feet, and owned ingenuouſly: "That he had aſſiſted Antony with men, money, and counſel, and would have ſerved him in perſon, if he had not then been engaged in other wars. I did not, (ſaid he) abandon him after his defeat, neither did the love I had for him change with his fortune; on the contrary, ever true to his intereſts, I did my utmoſt to prevent his ruin, by the moſt prudent and zealous advice I was capable of, which in all probability would have ſucceeded, if it had been followed; for I would have had him by all means to quit his Cleopatra, who I told him was the greateſt and moſt dangerous enemy he had; to rally his forces, and endeavour to repair his loſs. If (continued he) my firm attachment to Marc Antony, (who honoured me with his friendſhip, and loaded me with benefits) is to be reckoned a crime, I own myſelf guilty: every well diſpoſed heart would have done the ſame; for can one poſſibly be ungrateful to one's benefactor? at leaſt, it is not in my power to be ſo, who am too well aequainted with the laws of gratitude. Your majeſty may try it, if you pleaſe, to put yourſelf in Antony's

* Joſeph. Antiq. Judaic. lib. 15.

"tony's place; and you will find in Herod the "same zeal, the same fidelity and affection for "you, that he had hitherto for your enemy."

These noble sentiments pleas'd Augustus; he did not only pardon Herod, but confirmed to him the kingdom of Judea, and added several very considerable towns; † and admiring the greatness of his courage and resolution, at a time when he had every thing to fear, he conceived so great an esteem for him, that next to Agrippa and Mecænas, he honoured him most with his friendship. Herod, like a subtil courtier, cultivated it as much as possible: he built, to the honour of Cæsar, a fine city, which he called Cæsarea, in which were two magnificent temples. He instituted to the glory of this emperor, ‡ solemn games and sports, and gave great rewards to the conquerors. And Livia, being desirous to contribute her share in these premiums, sent into Judea to the value of five hundred talents for that purpose.

It was not on Augustus only, that all these excessive honours were conferred. Livia did not only partake of them, but there were also others inverted particularly for her. They built a town, § which was called Liviada. The senate exhausted all their invention in finding out the most delicate, and most studied praises. They gave her the most pompous titles; among others the superb names of Augusta, and mother of her country. The poets ‖ celebrated her in their verses; and by a sacrilegious excess, made her a goddess: they erected temples to her, and made a divinity of the most ambitious of women:

shameful

† Nicephor. Calist. lib. 1. c. 6. & 9. ‡ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. 16. c. 9. § Gaulter. Monum. Sicil. ‖ Horat. Od. 14. lib. 3. Ovid. de pont. Eleg. 1. Prudent. lib. 1. in Symmach. Tacit. An. 4.

ſhameful baſeneſs! which occaſioned this reflection, that if divine honours were thus proſtituted to women, what worſhip could be thought of proper to the gods?

Auguſtus would alſo give proofs of his eſteem and tenderneſs for Livia, by diſplaying his magnificence in her favour *. He cauſed a houſe, which had been Pollion's, to be pulled down; it was ſituated in the ſacred ſtreet, and took up ſo much ground that it reſembled a town; and after taking out †of it all the coſtly furniture, with which the princeſs Julia had adorned it, he erected on its ruins a moſt ſuperb portico, which he dedicated to Livia °; and was not content to give her publick marks of his eſteem, but added alſo many particular and domeſtick favours, putting the greateſt confidence in her, and preventing all her deſires, by contributing as much as he poſſibly could, to her pleaſure and ſatisfaction. In ſhort, her authority was not leſs abſolute than his own.

To

* Dio. lib. 54. † Ovid. Faſt. 1.

° Diſce tamen veniens ætas: ubi Livia nunc eſt
Porticus, immenſæ tecta fuiſſe domos.

Pollion was a freedman of Auguſtus, and had the honour of being raiſed to the order of knighthood. They tell a ſtory of him, that having once invited the emperor to dine with him, one of his own ſlaves happened by chance to break a fine vaſe of chriſtal: Pollion being extreamly provoked at this accident, ordered the poor creature to be thrown into a fiſhpond. The ſlave caſt himſelf at Auguſtus's feet, and begged he would intercede for him, which he did; but Pollion not only refuſed his requeſt, but had not ſo much as the complaiſance to change the manner of his death, tho' the emperor earneſtly deſired it. This diſobliging and brutal behaviour diſpleas'd Auguſtus ſo much, that he ordered every chriſtal veſſel that Pollion had, to be broke to pieces in his preſence.

To ſay the truth, Auguſtus could not well do leſs for her, conſidering the great regard and tenderneſs ſhe always had for him; tho' it cannot be denied, but there was a vaſt deal of art and cunning in her manner of proceeding, which the emperor did not find out till it was too late †. She never gave herſelf any trouble about his amours and gallantries, and was ſo far from thwarting him in his pleaſures, by a diſagreeable jealouſy, that ſhe was very well pleaſed whenever he was ſo; and even carried her complaiſance ſo far, as to be extreamly civil to Terentia, Mecænas's wife, who was paſſionately beloved by Auguſtus; and tho' in her heart ſhe had nothing but hatred and envy towards this rival of hers, who robbed her of her huſband's affections, (notwithſtanding his outward behaviour) yet ſhe carried it with ſo much evenneſs of temper in all thoſe diſputes, which their emulation created between them, that it ſufficiently proved the reſpect ſhe had for him She did not affect that ſort of auſtere virtue that makes people inacceſſible, but on the contrary, indulged herſelf in all thoſe innocent pleaſures which became her rank and condition; partaking of all the parties of pleaſure and diverſions, which were then in vogue at Rome, and were promoted by Auguſtus, as well as the other grandees of the town, who had the art of varying them into all ſorts of different ſhapes; ſometimes games and ſports, ſometimes races and ſhews of different kinds, at which all the better ſort and people of quality were ſure to attend, and never failed to make their court to the empreſs, who always behaved upon thoſe occaſions with the greateſt modeſty and reſerve, managing her reputation with ſo much

† Xiphil. in Aug. Dio. lib. 48.

much art and prudence, that tho' people had not the ſame opinion of her virtue that they had of Lucretia's, yet ſhe took care that no body ſhould have any thing to reproach her with. She was far from being as ſcrupulous as ſhe pretended to be, witneſs the great regard ‡ ſhe had for ſome particular perſons, but was always deſirous it ſhould paſs for eſteem only. She was often heard to ſay, that a prudent woman always finds in herſelf wherewithal to ſuſtain her virtue: and one day, when ſome young gentlemen, who had been ſo imprudent as to put themſelves in her way quite naked, were to be put to death for it, ſhe pardoned them; ſaying, that a naked man made no more impreſſion upon the imagination of a virtuous woman than a ſtatue.

Policy was the very ſoul of all her actions and conduct; and hiſtory furniſhes but few examples of women who practiſed it with more ſkill and good fortune. Thoſe who were moſt penetrating, could never diſcover her real ſentiments; not even Auguſtus, with all his art and ſkill, could prevent being deceived by her. She knew ſo well how to take advantage of his weakneſs, and acquired ſuch an aſcendency over him as nothing could be put in competition with; and Cæſar, maſter of the world, might very properly be ſaid to be ſlave to Livia. From thence proceeded the exceſſive authority of this empreſs, which was ſo much revered, and to which was paid a ſacrilegious and extravagant homage; and which, however they might flatter her vanity, were not capable of ſatisfying intirely her ambition.

The throne, which was the moſt elevated of all ſtations, was not able to limit her deſires. Her being ſeated there with Auguſtus was reckoned as nothing; ſo ardent were her deſires, that her

‡ Dio. lib 48.

her poſterity ſhould alſo be raiſed to that exalted rank, and that was the point to which all her projects tended. She cauſed to be given to Tiberius and Druſus (her two ſons by her former huſband) the moſt important and moſt diſtinguiſhed employments. They had the conduct of the armies, and the command of the legions; the authority of the emperor being always veſted in them; and however inconſiderable the ſervices they might do to the ſtate were in themſelves, Livia extolled them to the ſkies, by the moſt pompous reports that ſhe cauſed her emiſſaries to make of them; and ordered matters ſo, that triumphs were decreed them upon every trifling occaſion.

Juſtice however ſhould be done to every body, and it muſt be confeſſed that Tiberius and Druſus were great captains. The firſt had not only bravery but a vaſt genius, equal to any thing he could undertake. He underſtood perfectly the art of war; * ſo ready in determining what he was about, that it is reported he never deliberated twice about the ſame thing. Very ſevere in point of military diſcipline, being the firſt in all dangers and hardſhips, encouraging the ſoldiers by his example, and ſurmounting, by his conſtancy and perſeverance, all difficulties. He was generally ſucceſsful in war, which was owing to his vaſt abilities, not chance or fortune. But on the other hand, what vices did not ſully and tarniſh his good qualities! † He was cruel, arrogant, jealous of other people's merit, of a dark and gloomy temper ‡, incapable of tenderneſs or friendſhip; affecting, even towards his neareſt relations, a brutal ſort of pride, which made people afraid to approach him. He was deceitful and dangerous, never acting but with artifice and cunning.

A thick

* Plutar. Sueton. in Tib. † Tacit. Ann. 1.
‡ Eutrop. 2. Aurel. Vict. Epit.

A thick veil was always drawn over his heart. His words were wrapped up in obſcurity and equivocation, ſo that it was almoſt impoſſible to unriddle them, or find out his real meaning; and if it was difficult to comprehend it, there was not leſs danger in letting him know that one underſtood him. People had great reaſon to apprehend his dark miſtruſtfulneſs, which made him ſacrifice to his ſuſpicions all thoſe whom he hated on account of their merit or virtue. Beſides, he was ſubject to great exceſs in wine, which he carry'd to ſuch a pitch, that people in raillery called him Biberius inſtead of Tiberius [p]. But above all, he was given to the moſt ſhameful debaucheries, which he continued to an extream old age in the iſland of Caprea, where in an old and worn out body, reigned the moſt unruly and depraved paſſions of youth. Horrible impieties! which have noted and marked that iſland with an infamy that ſo many ages have not been able to waſh out. Theſe vices of Tiberius were no ſecret, nor were they unknown to Auguſtus, who in ſpeaking of him, told his friends one day, that the Roman people would be very unfortunate in being governed by a man that would make them ſuffer incredible miſery.

Druſus, on the contrary, was more polite, humane, and honeſt than his brother, and not leſs brave, nor leſs experienced. He had acquired immortal honour by a great number of victories, which had preposſeſſed every body in his favour. He was affable and ſincere, and ſo great an enemy to diſſimulation, that it is generally thought he would

[p] Some of Tiberius's courtiers repreſenting to him one day, that he ſhould puniſh the impudence of theſe people, he anſwered, that in a free town the tongue ought to be free.

would have reſtored to the republick its ancient glory and liberty if he had ſuccceded Auguſtus. Never was there a prince with better diſpoſitions. He loved virtue *, and what was to be wondered at in him is, that in the moſt corrupted court, at an age the moſt liable to criminal pleaſures, and in a rank that would have furniſhed him with opportunities enough of gratifying all the paſſions, he ſtill continued innocent, and as blameleſs as his wife Antonia, ſo much commended for her chaſtity. With all this merit he could not but gain the eſteem of every body, and eſpecially of Auguſtus, who, it is reported, would have named him for his ſucceſſor, if he had not apprehended, that by ſo doing he ſhould confirm the ſuſpicions people already had of his being his ſon; or elſe that he had a mind to ſet off his own reign the more, by having ſo unworthy a ſucceſſor. But what moſt probably induced him to pitch upon Tiberius, was his being abſolutely unable to refuſe the empreſs any thing.

Such were the two ſons of Livia, who with all their merit, fell vaſtly ſhort of the prince Marcellus, for beſides being poſſeſſed of all the good qualities in the world, he was nephew and ſon-in-law to Auguſtus, which were glorious advantages, and made him be looked upon as preſumptive heir. This was a powerful obſtacle to the ambitious views of the empreſs, and always inſpired her with a ſecret deſign to deſtroy him. In effect he did at laſt fall a victim to her ambition, for he died in the flower of his age; and we ſhall ſee, in another place, that Livia was thought not to be innocent in that affair. Auguſtus was extreamly afflicted at this loſs, and had no ſooner began to get over it than he had freſh matter of grief,

* Valer. Maxim. Suet. in Tiber. Tacit. Ann. 1. c. 3.

grief, occaſioned by a dangerous conſpiracy againſt his life. The chief perſon concerned in it was Cinna, grandſon to Pompey the Great, and who had drawn in the principal perſons of the town. This would have been fatal to the emperor, if one of the conſpirators had not revealed it. Auguſtus being informed of the danger to which he was expoſed, was never in ſo melancholy a ſituation, nor more ſenſibly alarmed *. He was in doubt whether he ſhould uſe ſeverity, or clemency. On the one ſide he apprehended, that if he ſhould pardon the guilty, it might encourage others to undertakings of that nature; and on the other, he was afraid, that by puniſhing ſome of them, the reſt might be the more exaſperated, eſpecially conſidering that his having put to death Cepion and Murena for the like enterprize, had not hindered Cinna, and his accomplices, from conſpiring againſt his perſon.

Theſe cruel perplexities and agitations had ſo bad an effect on him that he could not ſleep, but was full of anxiety and fear, which made him incapable of taking any reſt. Thus one may ſee, that there is no condition exempt from trouble; no good fortune, or pleaſure, that is not mixed with ſecret bitterneſs. This place in Auguſtus's hiſtory ſhews us, that the throne is far from being the ſeat of peace and tranquillity, ſince it generally happens, that ſovereign power is nothing but ſlavery, and drags after it innumerable cares and ſolicitudes.

Livia, who partook of her huſband's inquietudes as much as of his pleaſures, earneſtly enquired the cauſe of his melancholy; and the emperor having told her the occaſion of it, ſhe endeavoured to encourage him, by ſaying †, "That

* Dio. lib. 55. † Dio. ibid.

" he ought not to be ſurprized, that ſome peo-
" ple, jealous of his glory, had declared againſt
" him, becauſe, let a prince be never ſo mode-
" rate and equitable, it was not poſſible for him
" to pleaſe every body. Great men, ſaid ſhe,
" think they have a right to aſk every thing, and
" to obtain every thing; thoſe who are in a
" lower ſtation think themſelves deſpiſed, if they
" do not get what they require. From thence
" proceed cabals, conſpiracies, and rebellions
" againſt the government; for diſcontented peo-
" ple hope to find their advantage in any change.
" You have nothing to do but to double your
" guard, and to cauſe the palace to be ſurround-
" ed with the ſoldiers that are moſt faithful to
" you, which will effectually hinder the trayton
" from attempting your life." "This precaution,
replied Auguſtus, " would be to no purpoſe;
" for the ſword of thoſe who ought to guard the
" prince, is often more to be dreaded than that
" of declared enemies. The moſt zealous cour-
" tier, in appearance, is often the moſt formi-
" dable enemy; and the more to be apprehend-
" ed, as he conceals himſelf under the deceitful
" appearance of friendſhip; and has the more
" opportunities of gratifying his malice and ha-
" tred, the leſs he is miſtruſted. If foreign
" enemies make war againſt us, we have officers,
" generals, and friends to oppoſe them; but if
" thoſe pretended friends become our enemies,
" what remedy have we? Nothing then remains
" but rigorous puniſhments, to prevent their
" wicked deſigns; and that, without doubt, is
" the only method we have to determine upon."

When Livia perceived that the emperor was reſolved to put the conſpirators to death, ſhe undertook to prevail on him to change his mind, and ſpoke to him thus. " The honour I have

" Sir, of being your wife, and of partaking with
" you in all your fortunes, whether good or bad,
" permits me alſo to declare my mind freely and
" without diſguiſe, which I take the liberty to do
" with all ſincerity. You will pleaſe to conſider,
" that all bad people are not of the ſame charac-
" ter: ſome have, naturally, bad diſpoſitions;
" others fall into wickedneſs, for want of judg-
" ment to diſtinguiſh. I do not ſay that all thoſe
" ſhould be pardoned who may attempt your
" life, (for that would be attended with the
" worſt conſequence) but, in my opinion, leſs
" rigour might be ſhewn to thoſe whoſe indiſcreet
" youth may prompt them to commit actions
" which they would not do, if they were capable
" of reflection. It ſeldom happens that many
" guilty perſons are puniſhed, without cauſing
" ſeveral innocent people to ſuffer. If you are
" ſo merciful as to pardon theſe criminals, your
" clemency will cauſe their ſincere repentance
" and acknowledgments. Cinna, illuſtrious by
" his birth, his name, and his exploits, will re-
" turn to himſelf, and ſincerely repent of theſe
" violences. An enemy that has been generouſly
" pardoned, when one had an opportunity of
" puniſhing him, has no longer the power to
" hurt his benefactor."

Livia poſſeſſed the art of perſuading to ſuch a
gree, that it was impoſſible for Auguſtus to
iſt it. Her advice was as fortunate as it was
udent. The emperor, who had been very at-
ntive, thought her reaſoning ſo juſt, that he
uld not help being of her opinion *. He ſent
Cinna, and gave him a full account of the
ſpiracy, reproached him tenderly with his
ratitude, and reminded him of all the favours
had conferred upon him; and after having

* Senec. de Clement.

forced this conſpirator to own his crime, he not only pardoned, but named him for conſul the following year; and, upon his account, forgave all his accomplices.

This extraordinary clemency of Auguſtus was ſuch a charm as was not to be withſtood; and Cæſar's kind remonſtrances had a better effect, than his utmoſt ſeverity could have. This generoſity did not only extinguiſh the conſpiracy, but intirely gained him the hearts of all the Romans. Every body praiſed Livia, to whoſe counſel this noble action was attributed, and not a word more of revolting was to be heard. Auguſtus looked upon himſelf as indebted to her for all the glory that he acquired by this moderation, and conſequently regulated all his future conduct by her advice.

The empreſs did not fail to make the moſt of the happy diſpoſition Auguſtus was in, with regard to her; and did not let ſlip this opportunity of advancing the fortunes of her ſons: for as that was the important point to which all her actions tended, ſhe could not bear the leaſt obſtacle to it; which, without doubt, was the reaſon of her making away with Marcellus, in order to pave the way for Tiberius to the throne. But the births of Caius Cæſar, and Lucius Cæſar his brother, (ſons to Julia, Auguſtus's daughter, whom he had married to Agrippa, after the death of his nephew) was a terrible diſappointment, diſconcerted all her projects, and prepared for her other ſubjects of jealouſy, as well as matter for new crimes. Her policy put her upon taking all poſſible methods to obtain her ends. She then laboured with all her might to procure her ſons the greateſt and moſt important employments; and although Tiberius had already been made tribune, and Druſus conſul, Livia was pre-

paring

paring new honours for them, when providence, which often confounds our beſt contrived deſigns, partly overthrew thoſe of the empreſs, by one of the moſt afflicting events that could poſſibly happen, and that was the death of her ſon Druſus.

Tiberius, after having conquered Illyria *, and reduced Germany, under the obedience of Auguſtus, (who were become inſolent upon Varus's being beaten) came to Rome to receive the honour of a triumph ‖, which was one of the moſt magnificent that had ever been known, by the care and expence which Livia had been at upon that occaſion. Tiberius gave a moſt magnificent entertainment to the ſenators, the knights, and the people; and the empreſs, together with the princeſs Julia, did the ſame to the ladies. Livia did not ſtop there. She cauſed to be built a magnificent temple §, to perpetuate the memory of his victories, and dedicated it to the goddeſs of Concord, near the Capitol. She had an altar erected in it to the honour of Auguſtus; and, among other rare and rich preſents with which ſhe adorned it ‡, people moſt of all admired a piece of chriſtal of fifty pounds weight, and a ſmall tree of the true cinnamon, which ſhe conſecrated herſelf, and placed in a large baſon of maſſive gold, from which diſtilled a certain liquor in drops, which became extremely hard and precious.

After Livia had procured all theſe honours for Tiberius, ſhe was employing her thoughts about doing the ſame for Druſus, when the news of his death arrived at Rome, almoſt as ſoon as that of his victory; ſo that the pompous preparations which were made for his triumph, ſerved as me-

* Sueton. in Tiber. ‖ Dio. lib. 55. § Ovid. Faſt. 1. ‡ Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. 37. c. 2. lib. 12. c. 15.

lancholy trophies for his funeral. After this excellent prince had ſubdued the Sicambers, and other neighbouring nations, (antient Germans, from whom deſcended the inhabitants in the territories of Heſſe Caſsle and Guelders) and was become very formidable to all Germany, where, notwithſtanding the vigorous reſiſtance he every where met with, he had extended his conqueſts as far as the banks of the Rhine, which river he was about to paſs, when he was arreſted by death in the midſt of his glorious career: for being one day on the brink of the river *, a ſpirit appeared to him, under the appearance of a beautiful woman, and ſaid to him, in a menacing tone, "Whither does your ambition hurry you? Re-"tire, you are come to the utmoſt period of "your conqueſts, and your life," and vaniſhed. This fatal prediction was ſoon verified. Druſus ‖ died as he was juſt going to Rome to receive the reward of his victories. This melancholy news, which was ſoon brought to court, turned the publick rejoicings into the deepeſt mourning. Livia's affliction was ſo great †, that the philoſophers were ſent for to give her what conſolation they could; and the ſenate, in order to contribute what lay in their power to the mitigation of her grief, granted her the privileges which the laws give to women who have three children. Poor comfort for her unſpeakable loſs!

Certainly Druſus was worthy of the tears that were ſhed for him. His merit was ſo great, that if it could be ſaid, there was true virtue among pagans, no body could have a better claim to it than he. Livia was not the only mourner upon this occaſion; for Auguſtus, to whom Druſus was very dear, for more reaſons than one, was extreamly

* Dio. lib. 55. ‖ Sueton. in Tib. † Senec. Conſol. ad Marc.

extreamly ſenſible of this loſs. But above all Antonia his wife was afflicted above meaſure. She was daughter to Marc Antony the triumvir, wonderfully beautiful, and as to her prudence and diſcretion every author bears witneſs of it. She always lived with her huſband in ſuch harmony and love, that they were both of them patterns of virtue and conjugal fidelity, in a court where gallantry and debauchery were become the top of the faſhion. The irregular conduct of ſo many ladies, who indulged themſelves without ſcruple in all the pleaſures and vices of the times, and which were authorized and eſtabliſhed by cuſtom, made no impreſſion upon Antonia. Thoſe maxims which were moſt capable of corrupting the heart, found that of the princeſs Antonia always protected by wiſdom and virtue. Her reputation was ſo clear and free from the leaſt ſuſpicion, that no lady in Rome was in higher eſteem. Druſus was the only object of her inclinations; for which reaſon * ſhe would never hear of a ſecond marriage; ſhe reſolved to conſecrate the reſt of her life to the memory of Druſus, and paſſed it ‡ generally at her country houſe, which ſhe much delighted in, and where, among other innocent amuſements, ſhe § took great pleaſure in taking care of, and playing with, a fiſh, which ſhe loved mightily, and made it wear ear rings; which particularity drew an infinite number of people to her houſe, who flocked thither to ſee it ‖.

Druſus being dead, Livia employed all her care and diligence in favour of Tiberius; and ſeeing that Auguſtus was advancing in years, ſhe

* Joſeph. Antiq. Judaic. lib. 18. c. 8. ‡ Valer. Max. lib. 4. § Plin. lib. 7. c. 19. ‖ Plin. lib. 7. c. 55.

thought it was of the utmoſt importance to remove every obſtacle that ſtood between her ſon and the throne, and eſpecially to get rid of all thoſe who were next in ſucceſſion. She might ſafely do whatever ſhe thought proper, for the emperor was intirely governed by her, without reflecting, that by giving her ſo abſolute a power he betrayed himſelf: beſides, Livia was in a manner adored at Rome, where her authority was more reſpected than that of the emperor; every body ſubmitted to her orders; and that which would have been impoſſible to another, was perfectly eaſy to her; for, in order to compaſs her deſigns, ſhe knew how to proceed ſilently, without force or violence *. Her policy and ambition put her upon taking meaſures that were impenetrable, even to thoſe who were moſt clear-ſighted; and it was not without reaſon that Caligula afterwards called her † Ulyſſes in woman's apparel.

It was to ſome ſecret ſpring of her profound and dangerous politics, that the tragical and ſudden deaths of Caius and Lucius (ſons to Julia and Agrippa) were attributed. § Theſe two young princes, ſo nearly related to Auguſtus, had merit equal to their birth. The eyes of all the world were upon them as immediate heirs to the empire; for there was no ſort of reaſon to ſuppoſe, that Cæſar would go out of his own family for ſucceſſors; and Livia could make no doubt, but that they were intended to ſucceed, ſince Auguſtus had ſufficiently declared his deſign, by adopting his two grandſons, and beſtowing upon them the moſt honourable employments; for he had named them princes of the Roman youth, and was reſolved to appoint them conſuls as ſoon as

* Tacit. Xiphilin. † Sueton. in Cai. Caligula.
§ Tacit. Ann. 1, c. 3.

as they had paſſed the ſtate of puerility; ſo that it might be ſaid, they had already their foot upon the throne; but that was the utmoſt limits of their fortunes. Lucius died ſuddenly at Marſeilles; and Caius his brother in Lycia, as he was returning from the war of Armenia, where he received a wound, which, no doubt, was induſtriouſly prepared for him.

Auguſtus ſeeing none of his kindred now left, except Agrippa, youngeſt ſon of Julia, adopted him, together with the ſon of Livia. This ſtep, which divided the empire between Tiberius and Cæſar's grandſon, might be thought ſufficient to ſatisfy this ambitious empreſs; nevertheleſs ſhe was not able to bear this partnerſhip in ſovereignty, nor could ſhe endure that her ſon ſhould have a collegue in a dignity which had coſt her ſo much anxiety, and ſo many crimes. She did not long heſitate whether ſhe ſhould free herſelf from this grievance or not. She practiſed all her artifices to make Agrippa ſuſpected by the emperor, whoſe mind ſhe ſo poiſoned with malicious reports, and gave ſuch a diſadvantageous turn to all the actions of this poor prince, that the emperor, taking all for granted that ſhe was pleaſed to ſuggeſt, baniſhed his grandſon into the iſland of Planaſia.

This baniſhment was thought very cruel, becauſe it was very unjuſt. Agrippa had not indeed that politeneſs and affability which Lucius and Caius his brothers were endued with; * on the contrary, he had a ſort of coarſe air, which the genteel manners of the court had not been able to poliſh, and was very indifferently educated: but on the other hand, this was the only crime they had to reproach him with, except that of being too nearly related to Auguſtus.

* Tacit. Ann. 10.

Thus the blind condeſcenſion which this emperor had to the will and pleaſure of Livia, made him the tyrant of his family, and the principal inſtrument of her ambition, who aimed at nothing but to deſtroy his family, and who, concealing her perfidious deſigns under a falſe ſhew of zeal for Cæſar's glory, laid the foundation of her ſon's grandeur in the ruin of thoſe who might either traverſe or defer it. Auguſtus himſelf knew it at laſt, but too late to apply any remedy. He often complained to his friends of his cruel deſtiny in thus loſing all his relations in ſo ſhort a time, though they were very numerous; and which laid him under the neceſſity of calling in to the ſucceſſion his wife's ſon, to the prejudice of the only grandſon he had left, and whom he had condemned to a rigorous baniſhment, without ſo much as knowing for what. He called to mind the miſerable end of his nephew Marcellus, and of Lucius and Caius his grandſons, who had periſhed in their youth, and in whoſe death it ſeemed as if there had been ſomething very extraordinary. Thoſe reflections, which moved him extreamly, put him alſo upon thinking of prince Agrippa's misfortunes, againſt whom he had been ſo cruelly and unjuſtly irritated; and fancying that he had found out the true cauſe of it, he formed a reſolution to go and make him a viſit in the place of his exile. He did not communicate it to any body but Fabius Maximus, not thinking it proper to repoſe ſuch a confidence in many people; and after * having taken all the neceſſary precautions to keep ſecret this journey, he went thither, accompanied only by the above-mentioned ſenator. The interview was tender and moving. Cæſar's heart melted at the ſight of his grandſon, many tears were ſhed on both ſides, and

* Tacit. Ann. 1.

and thoſe of the emperor made people judge that the fortune of this poor young prince might one day change much to his advantage.

This little voyage, however, was not ſo much a ſecret as Auguſtus imagined. Maximus had not been able to conceal it from his wife Martia, and ſhe had the weakneſs or imprudence to mention it to Livia. This hatched in the mind of the empreſs miſtruſts that were fatal both to the emperor and his grandſon, and even Livia, in ſpite of all her cunning, could not help diſcovering to Auguſtus her vexation. She told him, with a certain air of pride and indignation, "that "there had been no occaſion for all this ſecrecy, "nor was his journey to Planaſia of that vaſt "importance, as that it ſhould require ſo much "myſtery; and that ſhe could not but take "very ill this want of confidence, as it would "render her very odious to his ſucceſſor, who "would always look upon her as a perſon he "ought to ſuſpect, ſince Auguſtus did ſo."

The emperor, who had truſted no body with this affair but Maximus, was not at a loſs to find out the perſon that revealed it; and this imprudence engraved in Cæſar's heart a reſentment which he could not forbear giving him evident tokens of, by one of thoſe terrible glances of the eye, which he was perfect maſter of upon occaſion, and which threw Maximus into ſuch a deſpair, that he immediately reſolved to deſtroy himſelf. He communicated his deſign to his wife, telling her, that ſince he had had the misfortune to diſpleaſe the emperor, in betraying his ſecret, he could not think of living any longer. Martia owned herſelf guilty *. It is I, ſaid ſhe, that am the cauſe of your misfortune; and, ſince I am become unworthy of your confidence, by

* Juſt. Lipſ. in Tacit.

by having revealed a ſecret of ſuch importance, it is but juſt that I ſhould puniſh myſelf for my unpardonable indiſcretion. Scarce had ſhe finiſhed theſe words, when ſhe plunged a poniard into her breaſt *, and Maximus immediately followed her example. [p] Tacitus will not allow of this, ſince he reports that Martia lamented the death of her huſband, taking the blame of it upon herſelf.

Be that as it will, Auguſtus never had an opportunity of bringing about any change in Agrippa's fortunes. The emperor died ſoon after, and nobody doubted, but it was one of Livia's contrivances, by giving him figs that were poiſoned, to prevent the re-eſtabliſhment of Agrippa, and thereby fruſtrating all her expectations.

Auguſtus died at Nola, in the very chamber where his father Octavius died §. His laſt words were in favour of Livia; for after having aſked his friends † whether he had not acted his part well on the ſtage of the world, he addreſſed himſelf to his wife ‖, charged her to be mindful of their marriage as long as ſhe lived, and then expired, giving her marks of his tenderneſs and affection.

His death drew ſighs and tears from all Rome; for ſince they were to have a maſter, the republick could not poſſibly have a more worthy one. His magnificence and generoſity had brought the greateſt and moſt powerful men of the town to bend to the yoke. His moderation made it plainly appear, that in all the violences of the triumvirate,

* Plutar. § Aur. Victor. Epit. † Dio. lib. 56. ‖ Suet. in Aug.

[p] Auditos in funere ejus Martiæ gemitus ſemet incuſantis quod cauſa exitii marito fuiſſet.

triumvirate, he had acted contrary to his ſweet natural temper, and that he was an enemy to blood. His excellent virtues made it ſaid of him, that either he ſhould never have died, or never have been born.

His death was kept ſecret for ſome time, becauſe it was apprehended that Tiberius's abſence might be prejudicial to his intereſts; but as ſoon as he arrived, the ſame inſtant that publiſhed Auguſtus's death proclaimed Tiberius his ſucceſſor. Livia, upon this occaſion, did not forget her uſual policy; ſhe affected an inconſolable grief, and ſhed tears in abundance. The firſt thing ſhe did was to cauſe all imaginable honours to be ſhewn to his memory. She had him immortalized; and endeavoured to perſuade every body, that there was ſomething in him above human nature, which the ſenator Atticus confirmed, by ſwearing, (in order to make his court to Livia) that he had ſeen Auguſtus's ſoul mounting up into heaven; and the empreſs, who knew very well that he had not ſworn gratis, made him a conſiderable preſent to reward this mercenary oath [q]. Superb temples were erected to the honour

[q] Atticus did, through complaiſance and flattery for Livia, that which the ſenator Proculus had done formerly, through policy: for Romulus, having been aſſaſſinated by the ſenators, whom he began to treat with haughtineſs, one day after he had been haranguing the troops, and the people being in motion on account of his diſappearing ſuddenly, Proculus ſwore, that he ſaw the king mounting up to the ſkies, with a venerable countenance like that with which the gods are repreſented. The people gave credit to this, and the more, becauſe juſt at that time there happened a moſt violent ſtorm, which furniſhed the ſenators with an opportunity of getting rid of their king, without its being taken notice of.

honour of this new god. Altars and prieſts were dedicated to him, and the empreſs herſelf would be of the number. Auguſtus by his will, left her the third part of all his riches, and adopted her into the Julian family, from whence ſhe took the name of Julia. Thus by an odd jumble of circumſtances, Livia was at the ſame time widow, daughter, and prieſteſs of Auguſtus.

The new reign was ſignalized by the murder of poor Agrippa. Livia was reſolved to be revenged of that unfortunate prince, for the miſtruſt of Auguſtus; and to take off the odium of that inhuman action, ſhe gave out that Auguſtus had ſo ordered it in his will: but every body knew that this was only another crime added to all the reſt ſhe had been guilty of, in order to eſtabliſh the power of her and her ſon, which increaſed daily, by the baſe and abject ſubmiſſions of the Romans, whoſe flattery put them upon ſeeking out for freſh titles and honours to be conferred on the empreſs. That of mother of her country was ſolemnly confirmed; and it was ordered, that to Tiberius's titles ſhould be added that of ſon to Livia; as much as to ſay, that the honours he enjoyed of having her for his mother, gave an additional luſtre to all the reſt. They were even of opinion, that, by a very ſingular privilege, ſhe ſhould have an altar of adoption, but Tiberius, who did not much approve of gratifying his mother's ambition to ſuch a degree, rejected theſe flattering propoſitions of the ſenate. He looked upon the exceſſive honours and authority which were given to his mother, as a diminution of his own. He remonſtrated to theſe ſervile magiſtrates, that honours ſhould not be heaped upon women ſo out of all bounds and meaſure; that as for himſelf, he would never conſent to their decreeing him any that were extraordinary;

extraordinary; and covering with the maſk of moderation the jealouſy he had conceived of his mother's greatneſs, he would never permit that her houſhold ſhould be augmented by the addition of a ſingle officer.

This behaviour of Tiberius was very mortifying to Livia, who had an inexhauſtible fund of ambition. As ſhe regarded the elevation of her ſon as the fruit of her labours, and had not raiſed him to that pitch of grandeur but in order to perpetuate her own, ſhe never ceaſed to bawl this in his ears, and tell him perpetually, that he held the empire from her; to give him to underſtand, that his acknowledgments ought to bear a proportion to the favours he had received. Tiberius, however, often failed in that point; and whether it was owing to his bad diſpoſition, or that he could not endure his mother's making the authority of the laws give place to her, he ſeized every opportunity of curbing her ambition.

The affair of Urgulania, the empreſs's favourite, furniſhed him with one: and alſo afforded Piſo an opportunity of ſhewing a great deal of firmneſs and reſolution, at a time when ſubmiſſion and flattery ſtood in the room of virtue. This ſenator had lent money to Urgulania, and to recover it, he was obliged to have recourſe to the prætor, who cited her to appear at his tribunal. She was under Livia's protection, and conſequently very powerful at court, which * made her ſo proud and haughty, that, in contempt of the moſt antient and ſevere laws, ſhe diſdained to go before the ſenate, or ‡ any magiſtrate, when cited; being therefore encouraged by Livia's authority, ſhe went to the palace at the very time when

* Tacit. Ann. 2. cap. 14. ‡ Ibid. Ann. 4. c. 21.

when ſhe ought to have been at the court of juſtice; for the empreſs, who ſet no more limits to her power than her ambition, had made a great deal of noiſe about this incivility of Piſo, and openly complained that ſhe thought herſelf affronted in the perſon of her favourite.

Tiberius could not well avoid intereſting himſelf in an affair which his mother had ſo much at heart, and thought that decency obliged him to intercede with the prætor in favour of Urgulania, againſt whom the unpolite creditor was very zealous. He ſet out for the prætor's houſe, affecting a calm and ſerene countenance; but that the magiſtrate might have time to decide the affair before his arrival, he ſtopped ſo often in the ſtreets, talking to one or other, that he plainly ſhewed he was not very ſolicitous about the matter. Livia was not the laſt that perceived it; and not being willing to expoſe herſelf to the vexation of finding the cauſe go againſt her, ſhe called for money, and paid Piſo the debt herſelf.

It was not only upon this occaſion, that the emperor gave marks of his indifference to his mother; for, another time, there were evident proofs of it, and in a more ſhocking manner, where her honour was directly attacked *. Farilla, grand-daughter of Auguſtus's ſiſter, having ſpoke ſome words that were very injurious to Tiberius and Livia at a full aſſembly, ſhe was accuſed of this crime; and to make her ſtill more in fault, they alledged, that ſhe had been guilty of a horrible adultery, and had ſullied the blood of the Cæſars by an infamous proſtitution.

There was nobody but what looked upon Farilla as loſt. The accuſation was no trifling affair, as it concerned both the emperor and his mother; ſo people expected, that there would be

* Tacit. Ann. 2.

be ſome dreadful puniſhment inflicted on the delinquent; aud it was, probably, the fear of pronouncing too mild a ſentence, that induced the ſenate to conſult Tiberius. But the emperor did not gratify the expectations of the accuſers, or the publick, much leſs thoſe of Livia. His anſwer was, that the law Julia had ſufficiently regulated the puniſhment for adultery; and as to what regarded himſelf, he did not deſire that Farilla ſhould ſuffer for having ſpoke ill of him; ſo there remained nothing to conſider of, but the offence againſt Livia; upon which the conſul aſked Tiberius's opinion. The emperor did not at firſt give any anſwer, but it was eaſy to perceive his thoughts by his looks; and accordingly he went the next morning to the ſenate, and as if he had ſpoke his mother's ſentiments, declared, that (however provoking the lady had been) the empreſs did not deſire any notice ſhould be taken of it.

Such was the recompence that Livia received for all the crimes ſhe had committed to raiſe her ſon to the throne. The ingratitude ſhe met with from him, did not however diſcourage her from taking every ſtep that was neceſſary to leave him in quiet poſſeſſion of that empire which ſhe had procured for him, at the expence of ſo much blood; and to remove every thing that might give him the leaſt room for jealouſy, ſhe perſecuted all thoſe of Auguſtus's family that were conſiderable by their birth or merit. As prince Germanicus, and his wife Agrippina, were certainly the principal perſons, and moſt eſteemed at Rome, ſhe took care to ſingle them out for deſtruction.

Germanicus was ſon of Druſus and Antonia, whoſe great merit we have already made mention

tion of. He was, in ſo high a degree *, poſſeſſed of every good quality, military, civil, and politick, that it was ſaid, he might be compared to Alexander as to his virtues, without the leaſt tincture of his faults. He was brave, without raſhneſs; diſcreet, mild, honeſt, affable, liberal, of an inviolable fidelity, prudent, an enemy to vice, having a noble and great ſoul; tempering the majeſty of his elevated ſtation with ſweetneſs and courteſy. His mind was anſwerable to his birth. He had no ſentiments, but what were great and exalted; was perfect maſter of the art of ſpeaking well; and in ſhort, ignorant of nothing that a great prince ought to know. By all theſe virtues, and extraordinary qualifications, Germanicus well deſerved the praiſes that were given him, and the eſteem they had for him, not only at Rome, but all over the world. Never was general ſo much beloved by the troops as this excellent prince was by his, who frequently offered him the empire, which he as often refuſed, and thereby made himſelf more worthy of it.

Agrippina his wife was nothing inferior to him. She was grand-daughter to Auguſtus, and deſerving of the moſt pompous encomiums. Her chaſtity was ſo univerſally acknowledged, that it was not in the power of the moſt envenomed calumny to injure her reputation; and this was the more commendable in her, as her mother gave her but a very bad example. She was endued with an extraordinary courage and greatneſs of ſoul; and it might be ſaid, that ſhe had ſurpaſſed the weakneſs of her ſex. She had however ſome faults, which paſs for noble ones in perſons of her rank. She was not without a good ſhare of haughtineſs and ambition, incapable

* Tacit. Ann. 2. c. 74. † Sueton. in Cai.

ble of yielding; and ſhewing upon all occaſions, a heart inflexible againſt all the viciſſitudes of fortune, and an enemy to diſſimulation and flattery; ſhe, upon all occaſions, gave proofs of her ſincerity, ſhewing by her words, in her perſon, and all her conduct, that noble kind of pride that her birth, as well as the innocence of her life, and a general admired character inſpired her with.

Livia *, whoſe reputation was by no means ſo well eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding her fair and regular outſide, could not bear to hear Agrippina's virtue and goodneſs continually extolled, and which ſhe could not help eſteeming, though ſhe could not prevail upon herſelf to imitate her. Beſides, having been always accuſtomed to receive the homage of the moſt conſiderable perſons, who were very aſſiduous to pay her the honours ſhe expected, it was inſupportable to her that Agrippina ſhould be the only one that affected not to ſhew her that ſervile complaiſance, nor bend under the yoke that the reſt of the world ſubmitted to. This reſiſtance ſeemed to leſſen her power; and ſhe was the more ſenſible of it, as ſhe had laid down it for a rule, that no body whatſoever ſhould dare to contend with her. This was the firſt cauſe of the emulation which afterwards divided theſe two princeſſes; and of that implacable hatred that Livia, ever after, had for Agrippina.

Tiberius was not exempt from this jealouſy, with regard to Germanicus; and his diſlike was ſo much the more dangerous, as it was ſecret. He could not endure to ſee in this prince, virtues which he had no pretenſions to himſelf. The triumphs of Germanicus, which ecchoed all over the empire, by the applauſes which were given to

* Tacit. Ann. lib. 2. c. 43.

to them, and which were ſo many undeniable proofs of his merit, engraved in the heart of Tiberius the moſt cruel envy. Whence proceeded the indefatigable endeavours of him and his mother to thwart all the deſigns and undertakings of the prince; but this was but poor ſatisfaction, and not at all proportionable to their malice and hatred. They appeaſed it therefore, at laſt, by the death of this great man, who was poiſoned by the treachery of Piſo and Plancina his wife, who were ſent on purpoſe into Syria, where Germanicus commanded the army.

When the news of his death was brought to Tiberius, he pretended to be extreamly afflicted, but it was impoſſible for him to make people believe him innocent; for the ſecret orders that he had given againſt Germanicus, were ſeen in the hands of Piſo, who even intended to produce them in full ſenate for his own juſtification, and to throw upon the emperor the ſhame and horror of this murder, as well as all the other wrong things that had been done in Syria. Agrippina left that country, in order to bring to Rome the urn and aſhes of her huſband. All the orders of the town honoured, with their unfeigned tears, the arrival of that precious pledge, which brought freſh into every body's mind the remembrance of Germanicus's virtues. They all left the town, and went to meet the proceſſion in deep mourning, that they might give to the manes of that beloved prince the moſt profound and ſubſtantial tokens of their grief. Never was there ſeen ſo great a concourſe of people together. All the houſes of Rome were left deſolate. The ſenate, knights, plebeians, women and children, in ſhort every body was gone to meet the urn; and it was received with as much reſpect, as if it had been a god.

Neither

Neither Livia * nor Tiberius appeared; not thinking proper to ſhew themſelves in publick, for fear their looks ſhould be obſerved, and people ſhould ſee in their countenances the joy of their hearts upon this occaſion. Livia, however, could not help giving proofs of her ſatisfaction, by openly defending Plancina, and protecting her by her intrigues and authority, againſt the puniſhment ſhe deſerved.

After the empreſs had ſacrificed to her jealouſy and ambition all the victims that were neceſſary, ſhe thought ſhe had nothing more to do but enjoy, without care or trouble, the fruits of her labours. Her grandeur and power were become idols, that were more worſhipped at Rome than the gods. The ſenate exhauſted their whole ſtock of praiſe and ſubmiſſion, being very ingenious in finding out new methods of pleaſing her, and inventing new honours to gratify her vanity; and carried their flattery ſo far, as to grant her a privilege of ſitting among the veſtal virgins at the theatre, placing, among thoſe who made profeſſion of religion, the woman in the world that had leaſt, though ſhe wore the maſk of it. As to her making magnificent preſents to the temples of the gods, that was only to impoſe upon the publick. She was not indeed covetous in that reſpect; for, not only thoſe at Rome felt marks of her liberality, but in all the provinces ſhe was careful to diſplay her magnificence that way, eſpecially at the temple of Jeruſalem. She ſent thither vaſes of gold, and other precious materials, of exceſſive price, as ſo many monuments of her piety, or rather her hypocriſy.

Tiberius however was not able to endure the unbounded ambition of his mother; for though he himſelf had as great a ſhare of it as any body, yet

* Tacit. Ann. 3.

yet he eſteemed only the ſolid and ſubſtantial part, not regarding the ſhow or outſide; ſo that the pomp and magnificence that Livia ſo much inſiſted upon, was inſupportable to him. He diſſembled notwithſtanding, as long as the empreſs was content with titles and honours; but as ſoon as he perceived that ſhe was carrying matters further, he could not any longer forbear letting her know, that her behaviour was not at all to his taſte, eſpecially with regard to an inſcription that was to be put upon an image dedicated to Auguſtus, in which ſhe had her own name placed before that of the emperor. He did not fail to look upon this preference as a manifeſt attack upon his rights; but not being willing to expoſe himſelf to all the quarrels he foreſaw would happen between him and his mother, he made a pretence to quit Rome, and retired to [r] Caprea, where he paſſed the reſt of his life in thoſe abominations that cannot be read without horror; and in the mean time Livia reigned abſolute at Rome, where her authority was

[r] Caprea was an iſland near Naples, where there was no port or harbour that could admit of large ſhips. There was only a little creek for the entrance of boats and ſmall frigates, and they were diſcovered before they could come near the place by the centinels, who were continually upon the watch. The air was very moderate and mild, even in winter; becauſe the neighbouring mountains which ſheltered it, broke the force of the winds: and in ſummer, the heat was not exceſſive, being always fanned with the ſea breeze. This was the place Tiberius pitched upon to make the ſcene of ſuch obſcenities as cannot be mentioned. Formerly in this iſland were two towns; at preſent there is but one, called Capri, which is a biſhoprick, and where was born John Gloria, inventor of the mariners compaſs.

was more fully eſtabliſhed by the abſence of the emperor. She even enjoyed for a long time the pleaſure of governing, and lived to an extreme old age through the goodneſs of her conſtitution, the uſe of Pezzino wine, and perpetually chewing a certain ſweetmeat compoſed of a root which Pliny calls † Enula Campana. But yield ſhe muſt at laſt, and pay the tribute due to nature. She fell ſick, and the news of it was ſoon carried into Caprea to Tiberius.

Though filial duty was not ſtrong enough in Tiberius to rouze him out of his infamous lethargy, yet one would imagine, that gratitude and decency would have obliged him, at leaſt, to make a viſit to his mother, who had given him the empire; but Tiberius was not influenced by either one or the other. Whether it was that in reality he did not care for ſeeing her, or that he was aſhamed to ſhew at Rome a head that was grown grey in the moſt odious debaucheries; or, laſtly, whether it was owing to his not being able to refuſe his favourite [s] Sejanus any thing, who choſe rather to keep him in Caprea, that he himſelf

* Plin. lib. 14. c. 6.

[s] Elius Sejanus was colonel of the prætorian cohorts. He raiſed himſelf by his cunning and artifice to the higheſt degree of favour that was poſſible for man to arrive at. He intirely poſſeſſed all the confidence of Tiberius. He was devoured in a manner with ſuch an unlimited ambition, that he aſpired to no leſs than the empire. He cauſed Druſus, ſon of Livia, to be poiſoned; and perſecuted, beyond meaſure, Agrippina and all her family. He was the author of a thouſand violences that the emperor committed. Tiberius was at laſt acquainted with the perfidious deſigns of Sejanus, and cauſed him to be condemned by the ſenate at the very time when this inſolent favourite thought that the emperor was going to raiſe him ſtill higher.

himſelf might have the conduct of affairs. He excuſed himſelf then on one pretence or other, and in the mean time Livia died †, being eighty years of age. Her body ‖ was placed in the mauſoleum of Auguſtus; and Caius Caligula, grandſon of this empreſs, pronounced her funeral oration.

The ſenate decreed to the memory of Livia as great honours as they had done to her perſon. But Tiberius, always affecting a great deal of moderation, forbid them; and would not ſuffer her to be immortalized. And for fear they ſhould think he was deficient in point of reſpect for his mother, he gave out, that ſhe herſelf had ſo ordered it.

† Dio. lib. 58. ‖ Tacit. Ann. 5.

JULIA

JULIA,

Wife of TIBERIUS.

THERE is nothing perfect in this world. The moſt exalted fortune and rank do not make the poſſeſſors ſo happy, but that ſomething is ſtill wanting to complete their felicity. It was the ſaying of a poet * who lived in Auguſtus's time, and I do not know whether any body ever verified it more than that emperor. He was become maſter of the world by his valour and the good fortune of his arms; and the mildneſs of his temper, the ſweetneſs of his reign, and prudence of his conduct, had quite obliterated all the horrors of the triumvirate, wherein he was but too much concerned; and bent to the yoke, thoſe who were moſt ſtubborn. He was feared by his enemies, reſpected by the inhabitants of the remoteſt corners of the world, adored by his ſubjects, eſteemed by every body †. He made the world taſte the charms of that peace which was ſo much wiſhed for, and which was the fruit of the victories he had gained over thoſe who were more envious of his glory and fortune, than zealous for the publick liberty. In ſhort, the limits of his empire were no other than thoſe of the whole earth; ſo that, if one might judge of things by appearances, Auguſtus could not but be the happieſt of mortals. However, if people do not ſuffer themſelves to be dazzled by the luſtre of his grandeur, but will take a nearer view of him, examine into his domeſtick affairs, and look into his heart, they will find that his cares, fears, perplexities and afflictions, more than

* Horat. Od. 18. lib. 2. † Suet. in Aug.

counterballanced the ſweets of governing. For what ſort of uneaſineſs did not always accompany that exceſſive power? Without mentioning the untimely death of his nephew Marcellus, which almoſt broke his heart, nor the conſpiracies* which were continually forming againſt him, which kept him in cruel and perpetual alarms; without calling to mind the defeat of Lollius, or the total overthrow of Varus [a], (events which had ſuch an effect upon him, as to make him ſhew tokens of affliction that were unbecoming

* Sueton. in Aug. Aurel. Victor. Epitome in Aug.

[a] Quintilius Varus was of a family more illuſtrious than noble. He had been governor of Syria, and it was ſaid of him, that he came poor into a rich province, and went rich out of a poor one. He was afterwards ſent into Ciſalpine Gaul, where he cauſed to be reſtored to Virgil all his goods, which the troops had plundered him of, and which piece of generoſity that poet has ſo much boaſted of in one of his eclogues. Auguſtus after that, gave him the command of the army which he ſent againſt the Germans; but Varus, ſuffering himſelf to be ſurpriſed by Arminius, general of thoſe barbarians, was intirely defeated. Three legions, and all the auxiliary troops, were cut to pieces, and almoſt all the officers killed. Varus would not ſurvive this ſhameful diſgrace, but deſtroyed himſelf, as his father and grandfather had done before him upon the like occaſions. The diſmal news of the loſs of the troops, and ruining of the army, was no ſooner arrived at Rome, than Auguſtus was ſeized with the moſt violent grief that man was capable of. He tore his robe to pieces, groaned piteouſly, and drove his head againſt the wall, crying out every moment, Varus, give me back my legions. He ſuffered his beard to grow, and in ſhort, ſhewed all the ſigns of inexpreſſible ſorrow. This was looked upon as the greateſt loſs the Romans ever ſuſtained in a foreign country, ſince the deſtruction of Craſſus.

a great prince). Let us only conſider the unakable vexation that the enormous irregularity of his only daughter Julia gave him, and we ll reckon this prince the moſt unfortunate of n, in the moſt exalted ſtation. Shame, conion, anger, and ſorrow, were the implacable mies that tore his heart. Scipio, Gracchus, ſpinus, and Julia's other admirers *, he recned his mortal foes. In ſhort, Julia ſeemed to have been born but to poiſon her father's pineſs, by the bitter mortifications that ſhe ſed him.

Cæſar Auguſtus had his daughter Julia by Scribia, his third wife, and he took ſuch particucare of her education, that the crimes with ich ſhe diſhonoured herſelf, can be attributed nothing but the extraordinary depravity of her nd; for the emperor had ſo ſtrict an eye over conduct, that his vigilance extended even to minuteſt of her actions. He made her emy herſelf continually in needlework, in order leave her no idle moments, which are generalpaſſed in occupations leſs commendable †. He bid her to ſay or do any thing but in publick, t the fear of being cenſured might put her alys on her guard, and that her words and acs might be ſuch, as ſhould deſerve a place in journal which he intended to keep. Beſides, commerce with ſtrangers was abſolutely proited, and Tucinius, a young handſome man quality, drew upon him Auguſtus's indigna, for having paid his reſpects to the princeſs Baya. The emperor wrote him a very ſharp er upon that ſubject, and highly blamed his ſcretion.

* Senec. de Brevit. vit. † Sueton. in Aug.

But how could the ſtricteſt education operate upon a ſubject, that nature might be ſaid to have turned out of her hands ruined and ſpoilt? The violent bias that Julia had to libertiniſm, baffled all her father's precautions, and Auguſtus's vigilance proved too ſlight a barrier to ſtem the furious torrent of ſuch a conſtitution. The emperor, who was fond of her to exceſs, could not forbear treating her with more complaiſance than he ought. Fatal indulgence! which was the cauſe of all her irregularities, and the reaſon of her giving afterwards full ſcope to her vicious inclinations.

Julia had a vaſt ſtock of beauty, which a noble negligence in her apparel rather ſet off than otherwiſe. She was of a chearful and moſt agreeable temper, and her converſation had ſomething in it ſo lively and charming, that all who approached her were delighted with it. To the fire and vivacity of the moſt inſinuating and ready wit, was joined ſo large a ſhare of learning, that ſhe was able, with a great deal of judgment, to give her opinion of, and even criticiſe upon books. A graceful perſon, a ſmiling countenance, and irreſiſtible charms, accompanied her grand and majeſtick air, which was without affectation or ſtudy; on the contrary, her behaviour and all her actions were ſoftened and embelliſhed by that eaſy and free carriage, which is peculiar to ſuch as have been brought up in high life. Her eyes made as many conqueſts as they caſt glances; ſo dangerous were they to thoſe who wou'd preſerve their liberty: and over her whole perſon was diffuſed ſomething ſo bewitching, that it was impoſſible to defend one's ſelf againſt her. In ſhort, one might venture to affirm, that Julia was, beyond contradiction, the moſt aimable lady in the empire.

She was but very young, when Auguſtus ought of procuring her a huſband, and did not ng heſitate as to the perſon; he pitched upon oung Marcellus, ſon of Marcus Claudius Mar-llus, and his ſiſter Octavia; and certainly, he uld not make a more worthy choice, for Mar-llus poſſeſſed all the good qualities than can nder a prince accomp iſhed. His name ſuffi-ently denoted the illuſtrious race from which he rung, for he was deſcended from that famous larcellus *, who ſhewed the world that Hanni-l was not invincible; and, who after having lled, with his own hand, Viridomarus, king of e Gauls, had the glory of being the third, af-r Romulus [b], who conſecrated to the gods the ms of the enemies of the republick; glorious onuments, which demonſtrated that in the fa-ily of Marcellus, valour and nobility were of e ſame date. This young prince had a fine dreſs, a winning air, was humane and affable, pular and aimable; and beſpoke the love and eem of all who approached him; and people, ove all †, admired in him that growing merit

* Tit. Liv. Florus lib. 2. Plutar. vit. Marcel.
† Horat. Od. 12. lib. 3.

[b] Romulus the firſt king of Rome, was the firſt o offered to the gods the ſpoils of his enemies; having in battle killed Acron, king of the Ceci-ns, he offered his arms to Jupiter, in a temple which cauſed to be built near the Capitol, where the Cor-iers church, called Ara Cœli, now ſtands. This called the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, from the tin word, fero, which ſignifies to carry, becauſe the umpher carried himſelf, the ſpoils he was to conſe-te.

"Sed quia victa ſuis humeris hæc arma ferebant,
"Hunc Feretri dicta eſt ara ſuperba Jovis.

which proved him to be the true deſcendent o his worthy anceſtors, whoſe virtues and extra ordinary qualities be poſſeſſed in an eminent de gree. Such was Marcellus, whom his unc Auguſtus was reſolved to draw ſtill nearer to hi by marrying him to his only daughter Juli The emperor, who was detained at Taragona, b an indiſpoſition, could not be preſent at th wedding, but for all that, would not defer i He charged his favourite Agrippa with the ca and management of the nuptials, who ſhew himſelf worthy of that honour, and acquitt himſelf in ſuch a manner, as fully anſwered th emperor's expectations.

This ceremony was performed at Rome, wi the utmoſt magnificence, and proportionable the birth and high rank of the prince and prince Agrippa had luckily an opportunity of addi very much to the grandeur of it *, for it ha pened, that exactly at that time, he finiſhed th famous temple, which he dedicated to Jupite and all the gods, by the name of the Pantheon and the ſolemnity of this conſecration was grand and ſuperb, that it did not a little cont bute to the ſumptuouſneſs of Julia's marria Agrippa, being reſolved to do all poſſible h nour to the daughter and nephew of Cæſar, a th

* Dio. lib. 55.

c The Pantheon is a famous temple built by Agr pa, and by him conſecrated to all the gods. It is t the fineſt piece of antiquity of that ſort at Rome. is of a round form, which Agrippa choſe, preferabl any other, to imitate the ſky; and that there migh no jealouſy among the gods in point of precede There is no window in this temple, ſo that the lig admitted only through an opening at the top. Urban the fourth dedicated it to the virgin Mary all the ſaints.

that nothing ſhould be wanting to ſhew his gratitude to his great benefactor, opened his treaſures, and diſplayed all his magnificence upon that occaſion. Nothing was to be ſeen at Rome, but races, ſports, ſhows and diverſions of all ſorts, in which the ſenate, knights, and every body partook, and expreſſed their extraordinary ſatisfaction, by all the ways that could be thought on. The empreſs Livia was the only perſon, who, in the midſt of theſe rejoicings, had ſecret grief and ſorrow at heart; for her ſentiments of Marcellus were very different from that of the reſt of the world; ſhe looked upon that young prince as a powerful obſtacle to the preferment of her ſon Tiberius, in favour of whom ſhe had formed vaſt deſigns. She thought of nothing leſs, than procuring the empire for him, and in order to compaſs that great point, made no ſcruple of cutting off all thoſe who ſtood in her way.

Marcellus was the firſt victim that was ſacrificed to the fortune of Tiberius, becauſe the great advantages he had of being nephew, ſon-in-law, and preſumptive heir to Auguſtus, kept the ſon of Livia at a vaſt diſtance from the throne. The empreſs thought proper (before Marcellus could have children) to ſhorten his days, in order to pave the way for Tiberius. It is not very well known what method ſhe took to accompliſh her deſign, for never did woman know better how to conceal her intentions: ſhe had the cunning to throw over this horrid crime, a veil, which eighteen centuries have not been able to remove.

When Auguſtus returned to Rome, he found Marcellus much nearer related to him than he was before, and ſaw with great pleaſure, that every body's heart was as much inclined to the prince as his own. The ſenators, in order to

make their court to Auguſtus, received Marcellus into their number, and gave him the rank of thoſe who had been prætors. He was permitted to aſk the conſulſhip ten years ſooner than he ought, according to the laws; and, to theſe great and valuable honours, the emperor added ſuch others, as made all the world take it for granted, he intended him for his ſucceſſor. But however charming and aimable were the good qualities of this prince, they had not force enough to fix the heart of Julia, who was not ſenſible of that tranſcendent merit, which was ſo much admired by every one elſe; and Marcellus, who ſo much deſerved to be univerſally eſteemed, was the perſon ſhe loved leaſt of all. As ſhe was born with an amorous complexion, or rather an ungovernable inclination to vice and debauchery, ſhe liſtened with attention and complaiſance to all thoſe who were preſumptuous enough to make declarations of their paſſion. She was conſtantly ſurrounded with ſuch of the courtiers, as were reckoned the moſt gallant and polite, who never ceaſed to make their offerings of the moſt delicate praiſe and flattery, which was ſo much malignant poiſon, and with which her ſuſceptible heart was ſoon infected. Multitudes of her lovers found their account in this aſſiduity, and it is credibly reported *, that Tiberius, among the reſt, received from her at that time, the moſt evident proofs of her affection.

Matters were in this ſituation, when Auguſtus was attacked by a diſtemper, that made every body deſpair of his recovery †, till Antonius Muſa[d], a famous phyſician was called in, and he was

* Suet. in Tib.

† Sueton. in Aug. Plin. lib. 19. cap. 8. Horat.

[d] Antonius Muſa was the greateſt phyſician in Auguſtus's

was ſo happy in the choice of his medicines, that in a little time the emperor was quite well. This ſickneſs of Auguſtus, was the occaſion of a miſunderſtanding between Marcellus and Agrippa, which in all probability, would have come to a downright quarrel, if Auguſtus had not by his prudence prevented it.

The emperor, as ſoon as he found himſelf taken ill, depoſited in the hands of Agrippa, the ring he uſed to make uſe of as a ſeal. This great mark of confidence, engraved in the heart of Marcellus a gloomy jealouſy, which quite overcame him. He thought it a preference as mortifying as it was unjuſt, and from that time looked upon Agrippa as his rival in Cæſar's favour; nor could he hinder himſelf from ſhewing evident tokens of his diſpleaſure and reſentment. This was reported to Auguſtus, and as on the one hand he tenderly loved his nephew *, ſo on the

* Tacit. Ann. 1.

Auguſtus's time, and had been made free by the emperor. His brother was phyſician to king Juba. Muſa cured Auguſtus of a moſt dangerous diſeaſe, by ordering him the cold bath. This brought him into the higheſt eſteem at Rome, where his preſcriptions were regarded as ſo many oracles, and cold baths were afterwards very much in faſhion. Horace, who intended to make uſe of the hot baths at Baya, by the advice of Muſa altered his mind in favour of the cold; which greatly enraged the inhabitants of Baya againſt Muſa, who had made their town deſert, by perſuading all the world to go to Gabia or Cluſium, places famous for cold baths. Muſa, beſides the glory of having reſtored to Cæſar his health, received from this prince magnificent preſents, and was permitted to wear a gold ring as the knights did. The ſenate erected a ſtatue in honour of him, and placed it cloſe by that of the god Eſculapius: upon his account great privileges were alſo granted to thoſe of his profeſſion.

other, he had a perfect esteem and affection for Agrippa; he therefore resolved to take a middle course, that should satisfy both parties *. He sent away his favourite for some time into Syria, with the honourable title of governor, and dignified Marcellus with the pontificate and the edileship [c]. He acquitted himself so well in both these employs, that the Romans were delighted with him; but in the midst of the applauses that were given him on all sides, he was attacked by a disorder that no body thought dangerous at first. Musa had the care of him †, for he was in the highest vogue on account of his having cured Augustus by ordering him the cold bath. He took the same method with Marcellus; but whether his distemper was different from that of the emperor, and required other remedies, or whether Livia ‡, (as was generally believed) had given secret orders, Marcellus died in the twenty-fourth

* Vell. Paterc. Hist. lib. 2. † Hor. Epod. at Val. ‡ Dio. lib. 54.

[c] The ediles were officers, who were intrusted with the government of the town. They had charge of the publick and sacred buildings, the solemn games, and the management of the theatres. Their employment also obliged them to take care that the streets were kept neat and clean, which was so rigorously exacted of them, that Vespasian, when he was edile, having neglected to have a street cleaned, through which Caligula was to pass, and who finding a heap of dirt, ordered it to be gathered and thrown upon the magistrate for his negligence. None but the ediles were permitted to have ivory seats in their coaches. None under twenty seven years of age were capable of enjoying this dignity. But though great respect was paid to their persons, yet they were not inviolable, for a magistrate invested with greater authority, had power to imprison them.

fourth year of his age, exceedingly regretted by Auguſtus, the court, and all the empire, leaving Julia a widow, and never had any children by her.

This death filled Rome with ſorrow. The princeſs Octavia, his mother, was inconſolable. The emperor was exceedingly afflicted, and the tears * he ſhed upon that occaſion, were glorious demonſtrations of the eſteem he had for him, and of Marcellus's merit. It was certainly impoſſible for Auguſtus to find ſo worthy a ſucceſſor. Julia made a ſhift to acquit herſelf of thoſe punctilios, which cuſtom and the rules of decency required, but they ſeemed inſufferably tedious to her: for as ſhe was then in the flower of her age, and height of her beauty, and of all things hated reſtraint, ſhe was very much rejoiced to enter into that ſtate of independence, which Marcellus's death procured her. She was not then obliged to a ſtrict obſervance of thoſe decorums to which ſhe was bound during her marriage, but was at liberty to encourage all the gay and polite young men of quality and diſtinction, who made their court to her very aſſiduouſly. Thus ſhe eaſily comforted herſelf for the loſs of a huſband, who had been forced upon her without conſulting her heart.

It is well known that the age in which Auguſtus lived, might be called the golden age, and the moſt productive of great men. There never was any but that of Lewis the Great that could be compared to it. The horrors of a war, during which Rome had ſeen ſpilt the pureſt and nobleſt blood of her citizens, were at laſt ſucceeded by a profound peace, the ſweetneſs of which all the world taſted of. The whole earth obeyed Auguſtus, and all ſuch as were diſtinguiſhed in the empire,

* Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib. 2.

empire, either by their illuſtrious birth, the importance of their employments and dignities, the politeneſs of their manners, the extent of their genius, or the reputation of their great exploits, compoſed the emperor's court, where gallantry reigned with ſovereign authority; for Auguſtus himſelf was the great encourager of it. And though his amours were never put in competition with his duty, it muſt be confeſſed that his love to the ladies was more owing to his natural inclinations than policy, whatever ſome have been pleaſed to aſſert. The principal courtiers were Mecænas[f], very conſiderable on account of his great

[f] Mecænas, who was deſcended from the kings of Tuſcany, was extremely powerful at the court of Auguſtus. He was poſſeſſed of every good quality, but eſpecially his moderation was ſo great, that he refuſed all preferment, and never would accept of any higher dignity than that of a knight. Auguſtus had the greateſt eſteem for him, conſulted him in his moſt important affairs, and had ſo good an opinion of him, that if at any time he was obliged to quit Rome and Italy, he intruſted Mecænas with the government. This favourite never made uſe of his credit, but to do all the good that lay in his power; and above all, was the moſt zealous protector of learned men. He uſed to ſpeak his mind to the emperor with great freedom, and it is reported, that one day when Auguſtus was ſeated on his tribunal, adminiſtring juſtice, and ſhewing a great diſpoſition to condemn a number of people, Mecænas, who perceived it, and not being near enough to ſpeak to him, threw the emperor his pocket book, in which were written theſe words, Riſe, hangman, and leave the court; which bold ſentence ſaved the lives of all the priſoners. Auguſtus permitted him to ſay what he pleaſed, and never took it amiſs; on the contrary, he was very glad to be corrected by a man he intirely loved. It is true, that Cæſar's regard for Terentia,

great credit with the emperor, and juſtly celebrated for his love to learning, and being the greateſt encourager of the muſes; Agrippa, Auguſtus's favourite, famous for his victories and his wiſdom; Tiberius and Druſus, ſons to the empreſs, who being honoured with the moſt important employments, held the firſt rank; Julius Antonius, ſon of Marc Antony, a very conſiderable perſon; Cinna, grandſon to Pompey; Murena, brother-in-law to Mecænas; Julius Florus, nearly related to Auguſtus; Varus, once illuſtrious for his exploits, and ſince remarkable for his being defeated; Lollius, very much eſteemed by Cæſar; Silanus, another of the emperor's near relations; Criſpinus, the conſul; Seſtius [g], much

Terentia, Mecænas's wife, occaſioned a coolneſs between them, which was the reaſon that Cæſar did not place ſo much confidence in him as formerly. After all, Mecænas would have been more to be pitied, if he had been more faithful to his wife, but it was well known that he was extremely in love with the wife of Sulpicius Galba, whom he viſited every afternoon, when her huſband went to ſleep. Galba was reſolved to let Mecænas know that he was informed of this intrigue; for having one day invited Mecænas to dine with him, he pretended to ſleep after dinner, but perceiving that a ſervant, who had alſo a mind to take the advantage of his maſter's drowſineſs, ſtole a bottle of excellent wine, at the very time when Mecænas was making his addreſſes to the lady; Galba cried out, You rogue, do you imagine that I ſleep for every body? [Puer, non omnibus dormio.]

[g] L. Seſtius, a Roman ſenator, was ſo ſteady a friend to Brutus, that after having followed his fortunes in all his wars, he had the boldneſs and generoſity, after his death, publickly to honour his memory, and to keep a ſtatue of him in his houſe, without fearing to draw upon himſelf the anger of Auguſtus. And the emperor

much valued by Auguſtus; Gracchus, of a moſt noble family; Cicero [h], ſon of the famous orator; Aſprenas, and an infinite number of others, that were exceedingly diſtinguiſhed at court.

The emperor admiring the inviolable fidelity which Seſtius preſerved to his ancient friend, even after his death, conceived ſo high an eſteem for him, that he gave him innumerable marks of his benevolence, and made him conſul.

[h] Marcus Cicero, ſon of the orator, eſcaped by a ſort of miracle, from the fury of the triumvirate. He had neither the learning nor the merit of his father, on the contrary, was ſubject to many failings, eſpecially much given to wine, which made him often guilty of unworthy actions, witneſs the heinous affront he offered to Agrippa, Auguſtus's ſon-in-law; for happening to be at table together, and Marcus Cicero getting drunk, threw his wine in Agrippa's face. As Auguſtus had not without great regret given up Cicero to the reſentment of Antony, he thought himſelf obliged to repair the injury, as much as in him lay, by extraordinary civilities to his ſon. In effect, as ſoon as the emperor had overcome all obſtacles, he reſtored to Cicero his eſtate, and did him the honour to make him his partner in the conſulſhip. Cicero made uſe of the power and credit which this high employment furniſhed him with, to blacken the memory of Marc Antony, in revenge for the ill uſage with which that triumvir had perſecuted his family. He cauſed his ſtatues to be broken to pieces; prevailed on the ſenate to publiſh an edict, that not only no ſort of honour ſhould be done to his memory, but that no one of that family ſhould be ſuffered to take the name of Marc, to ſhew his hatred to the triumvir; which obliged the young Marc Antony to take the name of Julius. Auguſtus permitted the conſul to gratify his reſentment in theſe trifles, becauſe he had always a very great eſteem for Cicero's family. It is reported, that Cæſar going one day

The muſes were cultivated by ſuch ſkilful maſters, that none could ever be compared to them. Ovid, the moſt gallant of all the Romans, and ſo ſkilful in the art of loving, was the honour and delight of the court, by reaſon of his happy genius, and his facility in compoſing verſes. Virgil [a] was in the higheſt eſteem for his extenſive knowledge,

day to viſit one of his nephews, and having found him with one of Cicero's books in his hand, the young prince endeavoured to hide it, being afraid that Auguſtus ſhould be angry at his reading the works of a perſon to whoſe death the emperor had contributed: but Auguſtus taking the book, read a conſiderable time, and then returning it, ſaid, "My nephew, this "was a man of prodigious learning, and a true lover "of his country."

[a] It is not neceſſary to ſay any thing by way of commendation of Virgil; his works have acquired him ſuch glory and reputation as muſt laſt for ever. He was born at Mantua, or rather a village near that place. His mother was on a journey, and her pains came upon her ſo ſuddenly, that having no better conveniency, ſhe was delivered of him under a tree, and it is reported that this child did not cry when he was born. Virgil was well known to Mecænas, who was the great protector and patron of learning; and it was through his intereſt that he was introduced into Auguſtus's court, and received into the emperor's favour, who made him conſiderable preſents, which the poet did not fail to acknowledge, and took care to proclaim, in his poems, the virtues and great actions of that prince. Virgil died at Brindes in the fifty-firſt year of his age, juſt when he had thoughts of correcting and reviſing his works. His body was carried to Naples, according to his own requeſt, and a monument was erected for him on the high road to Puzzoli. Monſieur de Guiſe, in his memoirs, ſays it is of white marble, and that it has the form of a dome. Virgil

was

knowledge, and the nobleneſs of his thoughts and expreſſions. Horace, ſo remarkable for his excellent poetry and moſt agreeable humour [b], At

was of a good ſtature, but ſickly and aſthmatick. On his tomb were engraven theſe two lines compoſed by himſelf.

Mantua me genuit; Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope. Cecini Paſcua, Rura, Duces.

[b] Horace is no leſs famous than Virgil. He was born at Venuſa, a town ſituated on the confines of the country called the Pouille, and his father, who was ſon to a freed man, having acquired ſome riches by fingering the publick money, carried Horace to Rome, where he gave him a very liberal education, which was not thrown away upon him, for Horace learnt every thing that children of the firſt quality ought to learn. And in order to add philoſophy to his other ſciences, he went to Athens. But the civil wars ſoon interrupted his ſtudies. Julius Cæſar being killed, and Brutus retiring to Macedonia, Horace who had put himſelf under his protection, followed the fortunes of that ſenator, who gave him employment in his army: but as he had little taſte for a military life, he quitted Brutus at the battle of Philippi, and returned to Rome, where, finding himſelf deſtitute of money and friends, he was forced to compoſe verſes for a livelyhood, ſome of which falling accidentally into the hands of Virgil and Varius, (who were then in great eſteem at Rome) they ſhewed them to Mecænas, who was ſo taken with them, that he expreſſed a great deſire to be acquainted with the author. He ſent for him, and finding in this young poet an extraordinary wit and vivacity, preſented him to Auguſtus. Horace employed his ſurpriſing talents in poetry, in celebrating the emperor's victories and great actions, and compoſing panegyricks upon Mecænas, Agrippa, and all thoſe who were in power, whoſe friendſhip he ſecured by thoſe means; and

At that time alſo lived Propertius, Varius, Tibullus, Catullus, Cornelius Gallus, Quintillus a Roman knight, Ariſtius Pollio, and a multitude of other great men, illuſtrious for their learning and birth; ſome of which celebrated the exploits of Cæſar, others compoſed works of learning and wit, and there were not a few who ſang their amours under feigned names, or cenſured the manners of the times.

On the other hand, the empreſs Livia; Octavia, Auguſtus's ſiſter; his two nieces, ſiſters to Marcellus; Antonia, wife of Druſus; and the other Antonia, wife of Domitius Enobarbus, (daughters of Marc Antony the triumvir;) Scribonia, whom Auguſtus had divorced; Servilia, who alſo had been wife to Auguſtus; Claudia, daughter of Claudius and Fulvia; Agrippina, daughter of Agrippa; Terentia, wife of Mecænas, and Cæſar's miſtreſs; Vipſania, Urgulania, and Priſca, the empreſs's favourites; Farillia, Auguſtus's near relation; Hortenſia, famous for her eloquence [c]; Cornelia, and an infinite number of other

and when he had gained that point, he ſet himſelf to make his ſatires, where he does not ſpare ſuch as he thought deſerved cenſure. Horace was low of ſtature, and was blear-eyed, in one of which he had a fiſtula, which occaſioned Auguſtus to ſay, that when he had Horace and Virgil near him, he might be ſaid to be between ſighs and tears, alluding to the fiſtula of one, and the aſthma of the other. Horace died in his fifty-ſeventh year.

[c] Hortenſia, daughter of the celebrated orator Hortenſius, inherited her father's eloquence as well as his name, of which ſhe one day gave good proof before the triumvirs, who had laid a heavy tax upon the Roman ladies, and which they were very deſirous to be eaſed of. They applied to ſeveral famous advocates to plead their cauſe, but they all declined it, not daring

other ladies of the moſt diſtinguiſhed merit, were the ſhining ornaments of Auguſtus's court. But none of them was to be compared to Julia. She was then ſurprizingly beautiful, ſo no wonder if all the world paid court to her, which they did with the greateſt aſſiduity; ſome becauſe they were ſmitten with her charms, others out of reſpect to the emperor, and great numbers in order to obtain ſome favour by her intereſt.

Auguſtus * as ſoon as he conveniently could, conſidered of a proper huſband for her; and after a little heſitation, pitched upon his favourite Agrippa; Mecænas ‡ adviſed him to it. That wiſe and good friend always ſpoke his mind to Auguſtus ſincerely and without reſerve, ſometimes indeed a little diſreſpectfully, but the emperor did not mind it, knowing that he was quite diſintereſted, and was ſolicitous for nothing but the honour and welfare of his maſter. As they were diſcourſing together one day, Auguſtus turned the converſation upon Agrippa, and begged Mecænas to ſpeak his real opinion of him. Mecænas (taking into conſideration the vaſt employments that Cæſar had heaped upon Agrippa, his great and many victories, and the prodigious eſteem and credit he was in all over the empire) anſwered Cæſar, that he had raiſed Agrippa

* Sueton. in. Aug. ‡ Dio. lib. 54.

daring to appear before thoſe three tyrants upon ſuch an occaſion. Hortenſia ſhewed more courage and generoſity than thoſe orators; for after having prepared a fine ſpeech, ſhe demanded an audience: it was granted; and ſhe pleaded her own and the other ladies cauſe with ſuch irreſiſtible eloquence and politeneſs, that if ſhe had not the glory of getting it totally aboliſhed, ſhe ſucceeded ſo far as to have it reduced to a mere trifle.

Agrippa to ſuch an extraordinary degree of grandeur, that he muſt either put him to death or make him his ſon-in law. This was a rare example of generoſity, and ſeldom practiſed amongſt courtiers, who are generally as zealous to traverſe the preferment of others as they are to advance their own fortunes; always imagining that the exaltation of others is a detriment to themſelves.

Marcus Vipſanius Agrippa † was not very illuſtrious by birth, but he made ample amends for the obſcurity of his family, by being poſſeſſed of every virtue civil and military, and by which he arrived to the higheſt power and credit that a favourite could poſſibly climb up to, which furniſhed him with ‖ innumerable opportunities to ſignalize his capacity, as well as his uprightneſs and integrity. He was a moſt experienced general, valiant and fortunate; an excellent ſoldier, able counſellor, a diſintereſted courtier, and great politician. Beſides the requiſites that go to form a great man, he had all thoſe that are neceſſary to make an honeſt man. He was an enemy to diſſimulation, a ſincere friend, a ſtrict obſerver of his promiſes, exempt from jealouſy, and of a moſt winning behaviour, never proud of his grandeur and power, (however great his credit was with the emperor) humble, eaſy of acceſs, and ever ready to do good offices. He was conſequently never envied in his exalted ſtation, but on the contrary, univerſally eſteemed and beloved. In ſhort, there was nobody but what rejoyced when Auguſtus gave him his daughter.

Agrippa was already, in a manner, one of Auguſtus's family; for * he had actually married Marcella,

† Tacit. Ann. 1. c. 3. ‖ Vel. Paterc. Hiſtor. lib. 2. * Sueton. in Aug.

Marcella, daughter of Octavia, the emperor's ſiſter: for which reaſon Auguſtus, before he gave his daughter to Agrippa, made a compliment to his ſiſter Octavia, whom he intreated to yield him her ſon-in-law, and to conſent that he ſhould become his. After which, Agrippa put away Marcella, and married the princeſs Julia. From this marriage proceeded Caius Cæſar and Lucius Cæſar, whom Auguſtus adopted; and Julia, who was married to Lucius Paulus, and Agrippina, who was married to Germanicus.

Agrippa was too far advanced in years to match with Julia, who was in the prime of her youth, and charming as we have deſcribed her. Neither did ſhe value herſelf upon her fidelity; for as ſhe regarded not her reputation, ſhe gave encouragement to all the paſſionate declarations of as many as pleaſed to introduce themſelves into her preſence, and gratified her lovers to the utmoſt of her power. Gracchus was one of thoſe who had moſt reaſon to boaſt of his good fortune †. The nobility of his family, the gracefulneſs of his perſon, and the gift of well expreſſing his ſentiments, procured him, from Julia, ſubſtantial marks of her eſteem, which he afterwards paid very dear for. Q. Criſpinus ‡, who had been conſul, and who under a grave and ſevere outſide, concealed a large fund of villainy and perfidiouſneſs, was alſo one of her favourites. Julius Antonius was another of her gallants; Scipio, Appius Claudius, and a great many others, ſhared in her good graces. In ſhort, there was no man (however low and mean) that durſt not form deſigns againſt the honour of the princeſs.

Such

† Tacit. Ann. 1. ‡ Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib. 2.

Such notorious and ſcandalous behaviour could not but be known by all the town. Julia became the common topick of raillery and ridicule. Thoſe, to whom ſhe proſtituted herſelf with ſo little reſerve, made her the ſport of their converſation, and ſhe herſelf, not caring what people ſaid of her, publiſhed her own infamy, and was the firſt to make a jeſt of her debaucheries. Some of her lovers aſking her one day, how it came to paſs that her children were ſo like Agrippa, who in all probability was not their father, ſhe anſwered laughing, that ſhe never ſuffered ‖ any one to approach her veſſel but when it was full; thus making a jeſt of that which ought to have given her the greateſt ſhame and confuſion!

I know not whether any credit may be given to the report of Auguſtus's having had too much complaiſance for his daughter. The extraordinary indulgence that he ſhewed her, gave occaſion to cenſures that were not much to his honour *, and the baniſhment of Ovid corroborated theſe ſuſpicions. It is credibly affirmed that this poet, who was ſo long the ornament of Rome, was deeply in love with Julia, and was far from being hated by her. That he one day ſurprized the emperor taking liberties with Julia, which are not very uſual between a father and his daughter; unlucky accident for Ovid, whoſe curioſity was ſeverely puniſhed by a rigorous exile, which nevertheleſs was given out to be for quite another ſort of crime. Be this true or not, it is certain that Caligula, afterwards †, made no ſcruple to ſay that his mother Agrippina was

‖ Numquam, niſi plena navi, tollo vectorem. Macrob. lib. ii. c. 5. * Aurel. Victor. Epitom. in Aug.
† Sueton. in Cai.

was the fruit of the inceſtuous amours of Auguſtus and Julia.

She was a ſecond time ſet free by the death of Agrippa, who was regretted by all the world, and eſpecially Auguſtus, who chiefly owed his fortune to the wiſdom and bravery of that great man. Julia was then with child, and ſoon after was delivered of a ſon, who was called Poſthumus Agrippa. It may be imagined that ſhe was eaſily comforted for the loſs of a huſband, who was too well acquainted with her behaviour not to have a very bad opinion of her. Her mourning was, accordingly, a ceremonious and not a ſincere one; for he was ſcarce dead, when finding herſelf once more at liberty, and not much reſtrained by the preſence of her father, who was often ‡ obliged to leave Rome on account of one or other of the provinces revolting, ſhe was reſolved to deny herſelf nothing, but to gratify her vicious paſſions without bounds.

This irregular conduct of hers was well enough known to Tiberius, who, in Marcellus's lifetime, had ſufficient proofs of her not being of a cruel diſpoſition. It was to him, however, that Auguſtus married his daughter, after having heſitated ſome time whether he ſhould give her to a ſenator or a knight ‖. It was no ſmall affliction to Tiberius to be forced to part with his wife Agrippina (by whom he had his ſon Druſus, and whom he loved infinitely) to marry Julia, whoſe character he was ſo well acquainted with; but it was the emperor that ſpoke, and beſides he knew it could not but be a conſiderable ſtep to the throne, ſo his ambition got the better of all other conſiderations: he divorced Agrippina and married

‡ Vell. Paterc. Hiſtor. lib. 2. ‖ Sueton. in Aug. 63. in Tib. 7.

married Julia. It was ſoon obſerved that his having parted with his firſt wife was great grief to him; for meeting her once by chance, he changed countenance ſo much, that the company ſoon perceived how far he was from being cured of his affection for her, and that ſhe was by no means indifferent to him; for which reaſon Agrippina was deſired to avoid him as much as poſſible, for fear that Tiberius's diſlike to Julia ſhould increaſe in proportion to his love for the other.

Theſe precautions being taken, there ſeemed to be a tolerable underſtanding between the new married pair, and people even thought that they were pretty fond of each other; but alas! this was only of a ſhort continuance. Tiberius was well informed of the life ſhe led; and for her part, ſhe deſpiſed him as being her inferior, and becauſe his gloomy and ſurly humour did not at all ſuit with her gay and wanton diſpoſition. In ſhort the wedding bands became inſupportable chains to both of them, and their mutual hatred went ſo far, (eſpecially after the death of a ſon they had) that an hiſtorian tells us they did not cohabit together *.

Then it was that Julia, keeping no longer any meaſures, gave herſelf up intirely to all manner of exceſſes. Thoſe conſiderations, which one would imagine were capable of making impreſſions on the moſt diſſolute and abandoned, had no ſort of effect upon her, whoſe ungovernable appetites hurried her away in ſpight of duty and all obſtacles. Neither the ſhame ſhe brought upon herſelf, nor the reflection upon her birth, which ſhe ſo much diſhonoured, nor the indignation of her father, with which ſhe was threatned, were able to keep her within the rules of decency,

* Sueton. in Tib. c. 7.

decency. All thoſe who attempted to adviſe her ſhe reckoned intolerably impertinent, and liſtened only to the poiſonous and infected leſſons of her paramours, who were a ſet of the moſt debauched wretches, and who eaſily infuſed their deteſtable and corrupted maxims into a heart that made no defence.

Tiberius, who could not remain an unconcerned ſpectator of all theſe diſorders, determined to leave Rome, under pretence of being weary of fatigues and buſineſs. It coſt him a great deal of trouble to get leave, for Livia, his mother †, beſought him with tears and intreaties to ſtay; and the emperor made bitter and very moving complaints to the ſenate, that Tiberius perſiſted in his reſolution to forſake him; but he was inflexible, ſo they were forced to conſent at laſt ‡, when they ſaw him ſo obſtinate in his deſign, that upon their continuing to oppoſe him he abſtained from eating during four days ‖. He quitted Rome then in a fury; went to Oſtia without ſpeaking to, or ſaluting any body, and landed at Rhodes, where he paſſed many a tedious and melancholy hour.

It is ſaid that Tiberius had many reaſons for this retirement. He was apprehenſive that the young princes Lucius and Caius might be jealous of him, or rather, he was ſo of them; for he could not endure to ſee them preferred to the higheſt dignities, and looked upon them as the apparent heirs of the empire. He alſo imagined that his abſence would make him more conſiderable, as he would thereby become more neceſſary: for as he knew he had done the republick great

† Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib. 2. ‡ Tacit. Ann. 1.
‖ Sueton. in Tib. c. 10.

great ſervices, he took it for granted that they would not be able to do without him. But it is certain, his chief reaſon for leaving Rome was, the vexation that the horrible irregularities of his wife gave him, and the more, becauſe he durſt not put her away, nor ſo much as reprimand her, for fear of provoking Auguſtus. He knew that ſhe took a great deal of pains to give the emperor a bad impreſſion of him, by the letters which ſhe continually wrote to him to that purpoſe, which were full of invectives and complaints; which letters were ſuppoſed to be the work of one of her gallants, and wherein nothing was omitted that could make him appear in the blackeſt colours.

Tiberius's abſence furniſhed Julia with an opportunity to ruin herſelf intirely; for there was then nobody to be a check upon her, and conſequently no bounds ſet to her vicious appetites, which a long practice of gratifying had rendered ſo habitual, that ſhe had contracted a miſerable impoſſibility to be otherwiſe. Senators, knights, conſuls, all were welcome. She was not one of thoſe nice, ſcrupulous ladies, that make a ſecret of their amours, and conceal them under a grave and demure outſide; ſo much precaution would have been an inſufferable reſtraint to her. She received her lovers by troops *, and run wild with them about the ſtreets of Rome in the night, and afterwards went and partook of treats and entertainments that they had prepared for her, which ſhe did not chuſe to quit, but in order to diſhonour † every corner of the town with her proſtitutions, which ſhe had the impudence to practiſe, even on the tribunal of harangues,

* Admiſſos gregatim adulteros. † Dio. lib. 54. Xiph. in Aug.

where her father had cauſed to be publiſhed ſuch ſevere edicts againſt adultery ‡, without keeping any meaſures, or conſidering any thing but the gratification of her furious appetites. All this was not ſufficient; but as if it had been her whole ſtudy how ſhe could poſſibly carry her exceſſes further ſtill, ſhe took it in her head, to have placed every day on the ſtatue of Marſyas ‖ as many crowns as ſhe had committed crimes during the night [d].

If all this was not atteſted by authors whoſe veracity has never been called in queſtion, nobody would give credit to it. In effect how inexpreſſibly ſhameful was it for the daughter of the maſter of the world to diveſt herſelf of all modeſty and decency, and even glory in her abominations. The emperor was afterwards thoroughly informed of them, but too late to apply any remedy. It is a fatal misfortune attending

‡ Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib. 2.

‖ Plin. lib. 21. c. 11. Senec. de Benef.

[d] Marſyas was a famous player on the flute at Phrygia, who was ſo conceited as to challenge Apollo. The god (as may well be imagined) remained conqueror, and in order to puniſh the inſolence and preſumption of his rival, he had him flayed alive. Others ſay that Marſyas was a prieſt of Bacchus. His ſtatue was erected in every free town, as a mark of its liberty, becauſe Bacchus was alſo called Liber, which is as much as to ſay, free. Be it as it will, there was at Rome a ſtatue of Marſyas in the ſquare called Forum Romanum, which was looked upon either as a monument of liberty, or of Apollo's victory. It afterwards became a cuſtom for the lawyers to place, upon this ſtatue, as many crowns as they had gained cauſes; and it was in imitation of them that Julia "eam coronari jubebat "ab iis quos, in illa nocturna palæſtra, valentiſſimos "colluctatores experta erat." Says Muret. on Seneca

tending princes, that they are the laſt who are acquainted with the affairs of their own family, and at the ſame time know every thing that paſſes elſewhere.

It is, however, very true, that Auguſtus was not quite ignorant of his daughter's licentious conduct, for there were not wanting thoſe who had given him hints of it; but whether he was both to believe theſe reports, or that his journeys, and the multiplicity of his affairs, diverted his thoughts from examining into thoſe matters, he left her intirely at liberty; till being fully inſtructed in theſe ſcandalous proceedings, he gave himſelf up to grief beyond what he had ever felt upon other occaſions.

At firſt he thought of nothing but treating Julia with the utmoſt ſeverity. Sometimes he had a mind to put her to death, and ſoon after, changing his mind, was reſolved to baniſh her to ſome deſolate iſland. When he reflected on her proſtitutions and moſt ſhameful behaviour, he was ſo overwhelmed with confuſion, that he hid himſelf for a great while, and would receive no viſits; and then it was, that being in the greateſt degree ſenſible of all the affliction a father is capable of feeling on ſuch an occaſion, his rage againſt Julia was carried to its utmoſt extent. He wrote a long letter to the ſenate, containing the whole detail of his misfortune, and in terms ſo pathetick and moving, that his exceſs of grief and affliction appeared in every line of his epiſtle.

When he had time to cool a little, natural affection took place of anger, and he repented that he had publiſhed his daughter's crimes, which unfortunately he had been ignorant of till then, or elſe had neglected to take the proper meaſures. In theſe violent agitations, he curſed the daughter that was the cauſe of them, and be-

wailed the loſs of Agrippa and Mecænas, who would either have prevented theſe evils by their good advice, or at leaſt have comforted him under them. So true it is, that nothing can make one amends for the loſs of a ſincere and diſintereſted friend: Auguſtus, among ſo many millions of ſubjects, was not able to find two that could be ſubſtituted in the room of Mecænas and Agrippa.

The emperor, in the mean time, was determined not to ſuffer the corrupters of Julia to go unpuniſhed. He made a ſtrict ſearch for them, but yet did not chaſtiſe them all equally. In the firſt tranſports of his rage, he fell upon one of theſe miſerable delinquents, and forgetting his own dignity, ſtooped ſo low as to beat him ſeverely with his fiſt, till the criminal, reproaching him with the breach of his own law, as to the penalties in caſes of adultery, he was ſo much aſhamed *, that he did not appear for a great while. Sempronius Gracchus was baniſhed to Cercina, an iſland in the African ſea, where Tiberius afterwards, to revenge the affront he had received, put him to death. Crispinus, Claudius, and Scipio, were alſo condemned to baniſhment, which was thought a milder puniſhment than they deſerved.

Julius Antonius, the moſt illuſtrious of all her lovers, did not come off ſo well. He fell a ſacrifice to Cæſar's reſentment; and to ſay the truth, he was the moſt blameable, having infinite obligations to the emperor; for after the battle of Actium, and the death of Marc Antony, Auguſtus gave a ſingular inſtance of his moderation and clemency, in not only pardoning

* Plut. Tacit. Ann. 1. Vell. Paterc. Senec. Clement.

ſon of his enemy, but giving him † the pontificate, the conſulſhip, and ſeveral governments. He did not ſtop there, but honoured him with his alliance, in marrying him to a daughter of Octavia, his ſiſter. Julius Antonius, notwithſtanding all theſe favours, being bewitched with the beauty of Julia, and having the misfortune to be agreeable to her, forgot all this, and run headlong to the gratification of his paſſions. He became the ſeducer of his benefactor's daughter, which ingratitude coſt him his life. Some ſay he killed himſelf, to avoid a worſe death that was preparing for him; others affirm that he was formally condemned, and ſuffered in conſequence of the ſentence pronounced againſt him for the crimes of adultery and treaſon. Be that as it may, it is certain that his amours with Julia were the occaſion of his death, and that he owed his ruin to love, as his father had done.

The princeſs had her ſhare in the puniſhment, for Auguſtus baniſhed her into the iſland of Pandateria; and being apprehenſive that her gallants might viſit her, he expreſly forbid that any body ſhould preſume to go thither without his permiſſion: and when any man aſked his leave to do ſo, Auguſtus ‡ would examine, with great ſtrictneſs and attention, the ſize, age, colour of their hair, the air of their face, the blemiſhes or particular marks of their body, in order to hinder § by theſe precautions, any one from ſeeing her in diſguiſe, imagining that in caſe he ſhould be deceived in ſpight of his vigilance, and that any lover ſhould venture to tranſgreſs his orders, he might be able to find him out by theſe marks and tokens.

† Vell. Paterc. Hiſt. lib. 2. ‡ Dio. lib. 54.
§ Sueton. in Aug.

Phœbe, who had been made free by Julia, and was her aſſociate and confidant in all her proſtitutions, prevented the puniſhment ſhe deſerved by hanging herſelf; and Auguſtus proteſted, that it would have rejoiced him if his daughter had imitated her. Nobody doubted but he ſpoke ſincerely, for he was not ſo ſenſible of the death of thoſe who belonged to him as of their diſhonour; and it was obſerved, that he lamented his condition whenever he thought of his daughter, the other Julia his grand-daughter, who was as debauched as her mother, and of Poſthumus Agrippa.

Tiberius was all this while at Rhodes [e], where he was indulging (with impatience enough) his ſpleen and ill humour, when he was informed of what paſſed at Rome, and how the emperor had puniſhed Julia. He was extremely glad to be revenged of her for the affronts he had received; but as he was maſter of the art of diſſimulation, he affected a falſe compaſſion for her, and wrote an artful letter to the emperor, whom he intreated to take ſome pity on her, and to excuſe her

[e] Rhodes was a town ſituated in the iſland called by the ſame name; it was formerly a celebrated place. There was a ſtatue of the ſun made by Charles the Indian, which was ſeventy cubits high. It was called the Coloſſus of Rhodes, and from thence the Rhodians were called Coloſſians. It was as much as a man could do to compaſs with both his arms the thumb of this ſtatue. It was placed at the entrance of the port, and the largeſt ſhip paſſed between its legs under full ſail. This Coloſſus had been made but fifty-ſix years when an earthquake threw it down. The knights of St. John of Jeruſalem had for a long time poſſeſſed this iſland, which was taken by the Turks in fifteen hundred and twenty-two. St. Paul addreſſed one of his epiſtles to the Coloſſians.

her weakneſs, which perhaps had been repreſented in a worſe light than it ought; to make ſome allowances for the vivacity of her temper, and to abate ſomewhat of his ſeverity for his ſake. Thus he pretended to have a great affection for his wife, and to be very ſenſible of her misfortunes, when at the ſame time nothing could give him greater pleaſure than her ſufferings.

The people were touched with compaſſion for her, and begged for her return and forgiveneſs, with more ſincerity, but not with better ſucceſs. Auguſtus was implacable, and ſwore that fire and water ſhould ſooner agree together, than he would conſent to her return. Cæſar's obſtinacy in this reſpect increaſed the people's deſire to obtain their requeſt: they redoubled their efforts; and that the emperor might be diſengaged from his oath, and have it in his power to recall her without being guilty of perjury, they threw into the Tiber a great quantity of lighted flambeaux, that the ridiculous prodigy of making fire and water agree, might thereby be brought about. But Auguſtus was not to be prevailed on to alter his mind, and hearing that there was a deſign to carry her off by force, he changed the place of her baniſhment, and ſent her to Rhegio in Calabria, where ſhe was treated with a little leſs rigour; but he firſt diſſolved the marriage that he had obliged Tiberius to contract with her.

Auguſtus died, and it was generally ſuppoſed that Julia's exile would end with her father's life, and that Tiberius would recall her, ſince he had intereſted himſelf ſo much in her behalf. But this new emperor ſoon ſhewed that what he had done was through policy, not love; he had ſuffered too much vexation from Julia's behaviour to pardon her, ſo that he no ſooner laid

hold of the reins of the government, than he forgot all he had wrote to Auguſtus in her favour. H immediately forbid her to ſtir out of her houſe, took from her the little money that her father had allowed her, under pretence that there was no mention made of it in Cæſar's will. In ſhort, he contrived matters ſo, that ſhe periſhed with hunger and miſery. It cannot be ſaid that this princeſs was much to be pitied, ſince it is certain that her crimes did not deſerve a leſs puniſhment.

LIVIA

LIVIA ORESTILLA, LOLLIA PAULINA, and CESONIA,

Wives of CALIGULA.

THE emperor Caius was ſon to Germanicus and Agrippina *. He was alſo called Caligula, from the little boots which he wore after the manner of the ſoldiers, among whom he was bred up [f], and which education procured him the affection of the troops †. He paſſed ſome of his youth with Tiberius in the iſland of Caprea, where he was a witneſs to all thoſe abominations into which that emperor plunged himſelf, and which he afterwards imitated. He alſo learnt there the art of diſſimulation, (ſo neceſſary in courts) and had an opportunity of acquiring and practiſing that great degree of cunning, which enabled him to accommodate himſelf to the odd and dangerous humour of Tiberius, from whom he found means to conceal all his vices by a moſt profound and matchleſs artifice; he contrived to inſinuate himſelf into the good graces, and preſerve the eſteem of the emperor, in ſpight of the many ſnares that were laid for him by his

 enemies,

* Tacit. Ann. 1. † Sueton. in Cai.

[f] Caius Cæſar Caligula was born on the laſt day of Auguſt, under the conſulſhip of his father and of C. Fonteius Capito, at the time when the legions, commanded by Germanicus, were in their winter quarters; which the Romans looked upon as an omen of his future grandeur. And as ſoon as he became emperor, theſe two lines were publiſhed, which expreſs as much.

In caſtris genitus, patriis nutritus in armis,
Jam deſignati principis omen erat.

enemies, who did their utmoſt to make him complain, that they might have it in their power to ruin him. By thus wearing a maſk he deceived Tiberius, who of all men living was the moſt impenetrable in his deſigns and words. His being perpetually obliged to act ſuch a part as this, could not but be extremely diſagreeable, but it was abſolutely neceſſary to his deſigns. He was naturally haughty, proud, cruel and inſolent, which was ſo different from what he pretended to when in awe of Tiberius, that it afterwards occaſioned people to ſay, that there never was a better ſervant, nor a worſe maſter *.

His firſt wife was Junia Claudia, daughter of Junius Silanus, remarkable for the antiquity of his family. He married her by the orders of Tiberius, for which he pretended to have the greateſt reſpect; and though he did not like his wife, he took care to be very complaiſant to her. She died in child-bed, which he was rather glad of than otherwiſe, eſpecially as ſhe was not a perſon that could contribute much to the accompliſhment of his vaſt deſigns; for which reaſon he looked about for one that was more for his purpoſe, and at laſt pitched upon Ennia, wife of Macron, colonel of the prætorian cohorts [g], who ſucceeded

* Sueton. in Cai. c. 20.

g After the emperors had intirely aboliſhed the liberty of Rome, theſe prætorian cohorts were appointed guards to the emperor and to the town. They had a camp in the middle of Rome, and became ſo powerful, or rather ſo inſolent, that when any of the emperors were killed, they took upon themſelves to chuſe another, which choice the ſenate was often obliged to confirm. Auguſtus made two of them captains of his guard; and whoever were poſſeſſed of thoſe poſts, became afterwards very potent; ſo that from Conſtantine's time

ſucceeded Sejanus in his employments and favour of the emperor, though he was as unworthy a man as the other. This woman had an inexhauſtible fund of ambition, and as her vanity had been fully gratified by the vaſt degree of credit and almoſt abſolute power that her huſband had exerciſed under Tiberius, (who was drawing faſt towards his end) there were no ways or means, though never ſo bad, that ſhe was not capable of putting in practice to perpetuate her authority.

Caligula had no great trouble to gain over a woman of ſuch diſpoſitions; nor was it any wonder that he found her ſo ready to liſten to his propoſals. She had been always at the top of Fortune's wheel, and was ſolicitous about nothing ſo much as to keep ſo, by ſecuring, in her intereſts, the perſon who very ſhortly was to be maſter of the world. Caligula promiſed to marry her as ſoon as he was in poſſeſſion of the ſovereign authority, if ſhe would make uſe of her power with Tiberius in his favour, and prevail upon Macron to do the ſame: and to convince her of his ſincerity, he added to his proteſtations, a promiſe in writing ſigned by his own hand, and confirmed it with ſuch oaths as were capable of overcoming the moſt obſtinate incredulity; which afterwards coſt him no more trouble to forget than it did to make them.

Theſe artifices of Caius had their deſired effect. Ennia *, dazzled by the luſtre of the throne, was not able to reſiſt theſe ſeducing and flattering hopes, though ſhe had no better ſecurity for them than the promiſe of the baſeſt and moſt diſſembling

* Sueton. in Cai.

time they were reckoned the firſt officers of the empire. The prætorian ſoldiers had better pay than the other troops.

ſembling of princes, whoſe affection ſhe endeavoured to purchaſe beforehand †, by granting all the favours in her power, and ſhamefully proſtituting herſelf to him whoſe pretended love was only a maſter piece of policy; fooliſhly believing that Caligula would keep his word with her, and that when he came to the empire, he would ſtrictly perform what he had promiſed when he ſtood in need of her aſſiſtance. That which was the moſt ſcandalous in this infamous traffick, was, that Macron, who was intoxicated with his power and credit, (and the leſſening of which, by the approaching change of government, he dreaded above all things) was the chief inſtrument in aſſiſting Caligula to corrupt his wife; imagining that he could not but be always dear to a prince who had ſuch obligations to him, and conſequently that he ought to ſtick at nothing to humour him. Fatal blindneſs of the man that is devoured by ambition, who is not aſhamed to bring upon himſelf a real and preſent diſgrace for a bare proſpect of future grandeur, though his hopes are uncertain and deceitful! The intereſted ſolicitations of this flattering courtier betrayed his deſigns, and were too eaſily ſeen through to eſcape the penetration of Tiberius, who was not eaſily impoſed upon, and who was reſolved to ſhew that he had found out the deſign. One day the artful Macron, having cunningly turned the diſcourſe upon Caius, whom he praiſed exceſſively; the emperor interrupting him ‡, told him coldly, that he perceived he turned his back on the ſetting, and his face to the riſing ſun.

Caligula, however, recompenſed very ill the ſubſtantial favours that Macron had conferred upon

† Tacit. ‡ Tacit. Ann. 6. cap. 46. Dio. lib. 58.

on him, who, beſides *, was very uſeful to him in governing the empire; for, not remembering that he was indebted for it to Macron and his wife, he never omitted an opportunity of uſing them ill. Hatred and ingratitude ſoon took place of the pretended friendſhip †, for he ſacrificed them both to his brutal fury. A melancholy inſtance of the ſmall dependence one ought to have on the favours of princes, that have been purchaſed by wickedneſs!

Tiberius, having by his death ſet Caligula at liberty, delivered him from the inſupportable yoke of ſubjection and dependence ‡. It may be ſaid that he mounted the throne with univerſal approbation, and every body offered up their vows for his proſperity. The ſenate, the legions, and the people, gave evident tokens of the joy they had at his elevation. The people conceived the higheſt ſatisfaction at ſeeing on the throne the ſon of Germanicus, whoſe memory was ſo dear to them, and whoſe virtues ſeemed to revive in this young prince. The legions had deſired nothing ſo ardently as the pleaſure of obeying an emperor who was born among them, and who had paſſed his youth in the camps and armies. The ſenate, that had been ſo humbled by Tiberius, and ſo terrified by his repeated acts of tyranny, who were almoſt continually in deep mourning for the death of ſome of their moſt illuſtrious members, (ſacrificed to his jealouſy and cruelty) hoped to find in the young Caius a wiſe and mild emperor. They therefore, to ſhew the extraordinary joy and ſatisfaction they had in him, unanimouſly decreed him the empire, abſolutely, without a partner; contrary to Tiberius's

* Philo. Leg. ad Cai. † Sueton. in Cai. ‡ Aurel. Victor. Epitom. in Calig. Philo. Leg. ad Cai.

berius's will, who had ordered that his grandſon ſhould be joined with him in the government. In ſhort, as the firſt beginnings of liberty always ſeem ſweet after a reign of ſlavery, every body hoped to find *, under this young prince, a happy change in his fortune, and each promiſed himſelf ſome advantage or other; ſo much, that the day of his exaltation was called Rome's ſecond birth.

Caligula, at firſt, juſtified the high opinion that all the world had of him, by a few pretended appearances of virtue and juſtice. He paid very punctually the legacies of Tiberius and Livia; and to their bounties he added ſome of his own. He cauſed to be publickly burnt the memoirs † which he found againſt thoſe who had perſecuted his mother and his family, to ſhew that he was ready to ſacrifice his own private reſentments to the good of the publick, and even of his enemies. He puniſhed the miſbehaviour of the governors of provinces; among whom was Pontius Pilate ‡, procurator of Judea, who being convicted of bribery, extortion, and other crimes, was baniſhed to Vienne, where he became his own executioner, and killed himſelf in deſpair §. He could not certainly die by a more infamous hand than that with which (by a horrible injuſtice) he had ſigned the condemnation of the Godhead incarnate, and of innocence itſelf. Caligula alſo drove out of Rome thoſe corrupt and effeminate wretches that had been inſtruments of Tiberius's monſtrous abominations. He degraded as many of the knights as had diſhonoured their dignity by any notorious crime. Laſtly, he ſet at

* Sueton. in Calig. c. 16. † Dio. lib. 59.
‡ Luc. 3. § Niceph. Caliſt. lib. 1. c. 1. 16.

at liberty all thoſe who had been impriſoned by the cruelty of his predeceſſor, and beſides that, made ſome of them very conſiderable preſents.

The happy beginnings of this new reign buried in oblivion all the horrors of the laſt; and there ſeemed to be little doubt but that an emperor, who in his youth could give ſuch tokens of ſolid wiſdom, would be a pattern of conſummate prudence, as ſoon as he ſhould have attained to a riper age. All the actions of Caligula proclaimed his merit and eminent virtues, and increaſed the high idea that every one had formed of the new government. But theſe ſerene days were ſoon changed into frightful ſtorms, for they were not the natural effects of real goodneſs, but a wicked and malicious diſguiſe that he had put on, the better to deceive mankind, and eſtabliſh himſelf upon the throne; where he was no ſooner fixed, than he threw off the maſk. By degrees he ſhewed himſelf in his true colours; and at laſt, weary of this reſtraint, he gave himſelf up intirely to thoſe paſſions that had long been curbed and checked by a tedious and diſagreeable ſtate of diſſimulation. They broke looſe like an impetuous torrent * that had undermined its banks, and bore down all before it. He ſhewed himſelf ſuch as he really was †, that is to ſay, cruel, wicked, and furious; the tyrant ‡, and not the father of the republick. In ſhort, he verified the prediction that the late emperor had made of him, who diſcovered enough of his natural temper, notwithſtanding his childhood, and the thick cloud of diſſimulation in which he wrapped himſelf. Tiberius ſaid, that in

* Sueton. in Cai. † Dio. lib. 59. § Aurel. Vict. in Epit. in Calig.

in Caius, he nouriſhed a ſerpent for the republick ‖, and a phaeton for all the earth.

Caius Caligula made good this prophecy. The death of Tiberius broke the bands that held in his depraved inclinations, which were as ſhameful as they were violent; ſo that this prince, though but a youth, was thoroughly acquainted with all thoſe vices, which one would imagine required a long life of iniquity to have made himſelf ſo perfect a maſter of. After having debauched his ſiſters by an horrible inceſt, he expoſed them to be treated after the ſame manner by other young men as wicked as himſelf, and afterwards confined them in iſlands, for having committed the very crimes that he had compelled them to; telling them, with a brutal and threatning air, that he had not only iſlands but knives. He forced his ſiſter Druſilla from her huſband Caſſius Longinus, (a perſon of great dignity, who had been conſul, and to whom ſhe was lately married) and kept her publickly in his houſe as his wife; ſhewing ſuch a furious paſſion for her, that when ſhe died, he run into the moſt ſhameful and ridiculous extravagancies, by way of demonſtrating his grief. In ſhort, he was guilty of the greateſt of all brutalities, and what was the moſt ſhocking to nature of any thing that can be conceived, for he debauched a daughter he had by one of his ſiſters * before he became emperor.

Theſe infamous practices were not confined to his own houſe. There was ſcarce any illuſtrious family in Rome, nor any lady of quality in the town, that he did not diſhonour, which he generally choſe ſhould be in the preſence of their huſbands, who were obliged to be witneſſes of their

‖ Sueton. in Cai. * Eutrop. in Cai. Calig.

their misfortune †, and then added the moſt provoking inſults and affronts he could invent ‡.

He ſcandalouſly maintained in his houſe the courtezan Pyrallis, who was the moſt famous concubine of her time. At laſt, after having glutted all his deteſtable appetites in the common way, he proſtituted his own perſon by a brutality that would ſcarce be credible, if there was any thing too bad for him to be capable of. He had practiſed all ſorts of crimes from his cradle, and ſet out, as we have obſerved, with abuſing, moſt abominably, his own ſiſters.

† Sueton. in Cai. 36. ‡ Dio. lib. 59.

LIVIA,

LIVIA ORESTILLA,

Wife of CALIGULA.

CALIGULA's inclination for his ſiſter Druſilla had been ſo violent, that it was ſuppoſed he was incapable of engaging in any new amour; but he, who by the natural levity of his temper, was extremely given to change, could not remain long in the ſame mind. Livia Oreſtilla was the perſon that innocently inſpired him with a new paſſion. She was of one of the moſt ancient, and moſt illuſtrious families of Rome; and Calpurnius Piſo, to whom ſhe had lately been betrothed, did not ſet a leſs value on her birth, than on her beauty. This nobleman, who was of the higheſt quality *, and immenſely rich, was reſolved to celebrate his nuptials by a magnificent entertainment, to which were invited all the people of diſtinction. The bridegroom, in order to make it ſtill more grand and pompous, intreated the emperor to honour him with his preſence, for which he payed very dear, for it coſt him no leſs than his quiet and his liberty.

Oreſtilla was very young, and very beautiful; the emperor very ſuſceptible of love, and poſſeſſed of abſolute power: it is often dangerous to be too civil to ſuch ſort of gueſts. Every thing was managed with the utmoſt ſplendour; nor were the moſt delicate meats, wines, and the richeſt furniture wanting, to gratify the ſight and taſte, even of thoſe who were the moſt difficult to pleaſe. Oreſtilla, the chief ornament of the aſſembly, appeared in all her charms, which were ſet off to the utmoſt, with jewels, rich cloaths, and

* Dio. lib. 59. Sueton. in Cai.

and every thing that was rare and coſtly. All this could not fail to make the greateſt impreſſion on the emperor, nor was it at all improbable but that Oreſtilla had ſome deſign of that nature; for that flattering ſuperiority of power, which raiſes one ſo much above other people, is ſo extremely tempting, that few have moderation and humility enough to reſiſt it. Be that as it will, the mirth and pleaſure of the banquet concluded in a very mortifying way for Piſo, and the more, becauſe he was far from expecting any ſuch thing; for he little imagined that the bride was to fall to the ſhare of another perſon, after he had been at all the expence of the wedding. It happened juſt ſo, however. Caligula, whilſt at table, fell in love with Oreſtilla, and not being over-burthened with the gift of ſelf-denial, carried her off without any ceremony, conducted her to the palace, and married her*; which marriage he afterwards confirmed by an edict, declaring that he had married Oreſtilla, though wife to another, after the example of Romulus and Auguſtus. But he was not ſo conſtant as either of thoſe two princes, for ſoon after he put her away: ſo true is it, that the moſt violent paſſions are the eaſieſt extinguiſhed, and that ſort of love which is ſo ſudden, often ends the ſame way. But what was moſt of all unjuſt in Caius, was, that after he had divorced Oreſtilla, he would not ſuffer Piſo to have her †; and ſuſpecting that they might ſee each other, notwithſtanding the prohibition, he baniſhed them both into ſeparate iſlands.

LOLLIA

* Dio. lib. 59. † Sueton. in Cai.

LOLLIA PAULINA,

Socond Wife of CALIGULA.

LOLLIA PAULINA was not happier than her predeceſſor. She was granddaughter to M. Lollius, remarkable for nothing * but poſſeſſing in perfection the art of concealing the greateſt vices under the appearance of moderation and wiſdom. In effect, he diſguiſed himſelf ſo well, that as penetrating as Auguſtus was, he was deceived by him, and took the maſk of virtue for virtue itſelf, which he thought he was rewarding, when he honoured Lollius with the greateſt employments; for he made him governor of Galatia, with the character of proconſul[a], when that kingdom, after the death of Amynthas, was reduced to a province. He afterwards made him conſul, and gave him the command of the armies in ſeveral expeditions, in which he was not always ſucceſsful; and at laſt, in order to ſhew him the

* Vell. Paterc. Hiſtor. lib. 2.

[a] Auguſtus divided the provinces tributary to the empire, into ſeveral parts. He reſerved the government of the beſt to himſelf, and left the reſt to the ſenate, and the republick, which was ruled by ſuch ſenators as had been conſuls or prætors, and they had the title of proconſuls. They were ſent to their reſpective governments in the name of the ſenate. They were preceded by lictors, and other marks of their dignity. They had power of life and death over the inhabitants of the provinces they governed. They had authority to raiſe ſubſidies as far as a certain regulated ſum. The people were at liberty to appeal from them to the ſenate and conſuls, in cauſes, ſuits, &c. Thoſe provinces which were ruled by proconſuls, were called proconſulary provinces.

the greateſt mark of his eſteem, he truſted him with the tuition of his grandſon Caius Cæſar, when he ſent him into the eaſt *; in which honourable employment Lollius acquitted himſelf very ill, for he gave the young prince very bad advice †, and by falſe reports and inventions, inſpired him with an implacable hatred againſt Tiberius ‡. He alſo fruſtrated, by his underhand practices ‖, whatever conqueſts Caius might have made; thus baſely betraying the truſt that was repoſed in him, to ſatisfy his inſatiable avarice, though a great poet has been pleaſed, in one of his flattering odes, to praiſe his diſintereſtedneſs §. For Phraates, king of the Parthians, at an interview which he had with the young prince Caius Cæſar, in one of the iſlands of the Euphrates, diſcovered to him the infidelity of Lollius, his governor, who being dazzled with the gold of thoſe oriental kings, and not being able to reſiſt their preſents, ſold them the ſecrets that had been communicated to him, and informed them of every thing that was reſolved upon in the Roman council. This baſe and unworthy behaviour obliged Caius to deprive him of his confidence and friendſhip. Lollius, ſeeing himſelf ruined in his reputation, and not being able to ſay any thing in his own juſtification, poiſoned himſelf that he might not ſurvive his diſgrace. Such is generally the miſerable end of traytors. They meet, ſooner or later, with the puniſhment due to their perfidiouſneſs, either in a violent death, or in dragging on a wretched life loaded with ſhame and infamy, hated by thoſe whom they have betrayed, and deſpiſed by thoſe to whom they have ſold their honour and probity.

Lollia

* Tacit. Ann. 3. c. 48. † Dio. lib. 59. ‡ Vell. Paterc. Hiſtor. lib. 2. ‖ Sueton. in Tib. § Horat. Od. 9. lib. 4.

Lollia had all the advantages that could be deſired. Her birth illuſtrious, her beauty of the firſt claſs, and her character very advantageous. To all theſe good qualities were added immenſe riches *, which furniſhed her with the means of making a very conſiderable figure at Rome. She was even remarkable for making a good uſe of that wealth, which had been the fruit of her father's horrid extortions and treaſons.

Memmius Regulus, conſul and governor of Macedonia and Achaia, married her; and ſoon after took her with him to his government. Their unlucky ſtars, or rather the brutality of Caligula, in a little time brought them back to Rome †. The emperor having one day heard ſay, that Lollia's grandmother had been a lady of extraordinary beauty, he took it in his head to have a great mind ‡ to ſee the granddaughter of ſo remarkable a perſon. He did not long heſitate whether he ſhould gratify his curioſity or not. Memmius, who was then at the head of the army, had orders to haſten, as ſoon as poſſible, to court, with Lollia Paulina his wife.

She no ſooner made her appearance, but Caligula was deeply in love, and being hurried on by his furious paſſion, obliged Memmius to yield her to him. He even compelled him to act the part of her father upon this occaſion, and to give her. He then married her with all the uſual formalities, much in the ſame manner as Auguſtus had married Livia.

Lollia was very ſenſible of the advantages that this great change of fortune afforded her, and was, no doubt, rejoiced to have her vanity thus gratified: but her ſatisfaction was of as ſhort continuance

* Plin. lib. 9. c. 35. † Sueton. in Cai. ‡ Dio. lib. 58.

continuance as the emperor's paſſion, for Caligula (as ready to hate as he was to love) was ſoon as much diſguſted with this lady, as he had been with the others, ſo that with all her beauty and rich apparel, ſhe was not capable of fixing the heart of this fickle and whimſical prince *, who divorced her without giving any reaſon for it, and very coldly ſent her away, ſtrictly charging her never to marry any man whatſoever.

Lollia Paulina, who had been with ſo much rapidity exalted to the ſovereign power, was as ſuddenly reduced to her former condition, and became an example of the inſtability of fortune, and how little it is to be reckoned upon. She ſupported it, however, with a great deal of firmneſs and reſolution, comforting herſelf with her riches. She partook of all the diverſions, but was very careful of her conduct, ſo as to give no room for cenſure. She ſhone at all aſſemblies †, as well by her captivating beauty, as by the pearls, rubies, and moſt valuable diamonds, with which ſhe might be ſaid to be rather covered than adorned; and for which ſhe was not indebted to the generoſity of Caligula, but to the ſucceſſion of Lollius, who had accumulated all this wealth by the plunder of whole provinces.

She lived in this manner during all the reſt of Caligula's reign, and the beginning of Claudius's: but Meſſalina being dead, Paulina, who had by no means loſt her reliſh for power and authority, began to conceive hopes of remounting that throne, which ſhe loſt by the inconſtancy of Caius. She might reaſonably have pretended to this exalted degree of honour, if there had not been a great many competitors; but the throne has too many charms not to make more than one perſon

* Dio. Sueton. in Cai. † Plin. lib. 9. c. 35.

perſon ſigh for it ‡. Every lady of beauty and diſtinction at Rome, flattered herſelf with having as good pretenſions to the ſovereignty as Paulina; but two there were eſpecially, who diſputed with her the heart of Cæſar. Elia Petina, and Agrippina, were theſe two dangerous rivals. Theſe ladies, as may well be imagined, made the moſt of their beauty, and neglected nothing that could poſſibly ſet themſelves off to advantage. They had almoſt an equal degree of favour and intereſt, being each of them ſupported by one of three favourites that governed the emperor. Claudius, the moſt ſtupid and irreſolute of all men, heſitated a great while before he could come to any reſolution; and before he determined, was reſolved to know the opinions of Pallas, Caliſtes, and Narciſſus, his three maſters; for Claudius had veſted the ſovereign authority, and intire government of the empire, in the hands of theſe three unworthy wretches, who ruled the world according to their own humour and caprice.

Narciſſus propoſed Elia Petina, who had already been married to Claudius, and divorced without any crime being imputed to her. [See Claudius's wives.] Caliſtes, who undertook Lollia's intereſts, repreſented to the emperor, that though it was true that Petina had been divorced without any reaſon, it would be dangerous to expoſe himſelf and his children to her revenge, who was full of reſentment for the affront that had been put upon her, and that ſhe could never be other than a cruel ſtepmother to his children, (the prince Germanicus, and the princeſs Octavia.) That his marrying her a ſecond time, would make her only more haughty and imperious. That nothing of all this was to be feared

‡ Tacit. Ann. 12. c. 1.

from Lollia, who was remarkable for her illuſtrious birth, and for her beauty, in which reſpect but few could be compared to her, and for ſuch a reputation, as was proof againſt the utmoſt that malice could invent. He added, that the particular intereſt of Britannicus and Octavia, (who were Claudius's children by his wife Meſſalina) required Lollia preferably to any other, becauſe, as ſhe never had children, ſhe would look upon her huſband's as her own.

Pallas ſpeaking in behalf of Agrippina (to whoſe intereſts he was particularly attached, for reaſons that were far from being innocent) proclaimed aloud her extraordinary qualifications, laid great ſtreſs upon the nobility of her birth; for ſhe was deſcended from the family of the Claudians, as well as the emperor. He extolled to the ſkies her beauty and merit; and Agrippina herſelf had the art of fortifying his reaſons in ſuch a manner, by her cunning and bewitching careſſes, which were not at all conſiſtent with modeſty; that Claudius determined for her, by a falſe and ill judged diſcernment, of which he had very ſoon reaſon to repent.

This choice confounded all the hopes of Paulina, who now ſaw her pretenſions vaniſh, and all her ambitious projects come to nothing; but that was not her only misfortune, for the revenge and jealouſy of Agrippina was the occaſion of others, which were fatal to her *. This princeſs, who had extremely dreaded the power of her rivals, conceived an implacable hatred towards Paulina, and reſolved to chaſtiſe her aſſurance in pretending to marry the emperor, which ſhe looked upon as an attack upon her rights. She thought proper, indeed, to conceal her reſentment for ſome time, but as ſoon as ſhe had

* Tacit. Ann. 12. cap. 22.

ſecured her fortune, ſhe indulged her rage to the utmoſt.

The ſpeedieſt and moſt cruel effects of her fury fell upon Lollia, becauſe her beauty was the moſt formidable. Agrippina, whilſt her power was but yet in its infancy, did not care to proceed in a violent manner, ſo would not venture to put Lollia to death without ſome pretence; and it was no eaſy matter to find one, becauſe the conduct of this lady had always been ſuch, as gave her enemies no handle againſt her; but the empreſs, not being longer able to deny herſelf the ſatisfaction of ſacrificing this victim to her malice, ſuborned a perſon, who accuſed her to Claudius of the crime of ſuperſtition.

In order to render this more plauſible, it was embelliſhed with many ſpecious circumſtances, which were artfully invented. She was reproached with having * given credit to the predictions of the Chaldeans, and to have ſacrilegiouſly ſearched into the dark caverns of futurity, to diſcover whether the emperor's marriage would be fortunate or not, and to have conſulted the oracles of the gods, to ſatisfy this criminal curioſity. All theſe crimes were enormous, but they were all falſe; and it would have been very eaſy for Lollia to have ſhewn the contrary (for they were ſupported by no proofs) if ſhe had been permitted to juſtify herſelf. But care was taken that ſhe ſhould have no ſuch opportunity. That would have occaſioned too much confuſion to the authors of this calumny; and the innocence of the accuſed could not have appeared, without publiſhing the infernal malice of the accuſer.

As ſoon as this accuſation was contrived againſt Lollia, the emperor went to inform the ſenate of it.

* Tacit. Ann. 12. c. 22.

it. At firſt he ſpoke of this lady very advantageouſly, mentioned her great nobility, and how much ſhe was to be reſpected for being the daughter of L. Voluſius, and niece of Cotta Meſſalinus. He ſpoke of her marriage with Memmius, who was illuſtrious by his great employments; but was maliciouſly ſilent as to her having been wife to Caligula, for fear that it would put them in mind of the ill treatment he was giving to the wife of an emperor, who ought not to be put on a level with ordinary people. At laſt, after having tired the ſenate with a very tedious diſcourſe, he told them that Lollia took upon her to trouble the ſtate with her dark practices, and that it might not be in her power to put her miſchievous projects in execution, he ſacrificed her to the good of the publick; and immediately baniſhed her from all Italy, and confiſcated her eſtate, leaving her but a very ſmall part of her immenſe riches.

This unjuſt exile, one would think, was a puniſhment ſevere enough for an imaginary crime, and what ought to have ſatisfied Agrippina; but it ſeldom happens that malicious people can prevail on themſelves to ſet bounds to their revenge, when they have in their hands the power to gratify that diabolical paſſion. Agrippina mortally hated Lollia, and it was not poſſible that the fire of her implacable wrath could be extinguiſhed by any thing leſs than the blood of her enemy. A tribune [b] was preſently diſpatched to the place of her baniſhment, with orders to put her to death; and it is very probable that the empreſs took care to chuſe a proper perſon to perform this infamous commiſſion. She was not deceived

[b] They gave the name of tribune to the captains of cohorts. A cohort conſiſts of five hundred men. A legion of ten cohorts.

ved in her choice, for this unjuſt order was executed with the ſame cruelty with which it was given; and Lollia expiated by her death, the unpardonable crime of having endeavoured to marry Claudius. Agrippina's vengeance was not yet intirely glutted: ſhe was determined to carry it beyond the death of her rival, and therefore commanded her head to be brought to her, in order to feaſt her eyes with ſo agreeable a ſpectacle. She had this poor ſatisfaction * ; for the head was brought to Rome. She contemplated and examined it very narrowly; and, for fear of being impoſed upon, and that ſome other head had been brought inſtead of Lollia's, ſhe had † the cruel curioſity to convince herſelf of the truth, by brutally opening her mouth, which ſhe did with her own hands, to ſee by her teeth (where it ſeems ſhe had ſomething a little particular) whether it was really the head of Lollia.

* Dio. lib. 60. † Xiphilin. in Claud.

CESONIA.

CESONIA,

The laſt Wife of CALIGULA.

AFTER Caligula had divorced Lollia, as has been related, Ceſonia made her appearance *. She was daughter of Orphitus and Veſtilla. Ceſonia was married to another man †, when Caius eſpouſed her, who had three daughters by her. She had neither the beauty nor the prudence of Caius's other wives ‡; notwithſtanding which, he loved her the beſt, and was always conſtant to her. He could not poſſibly make a choice more worthy of himſelf, nor pitch upon one who would enter more cordially into all his ways and humours. She was impudent, bold, and haughty, to the laſt degree ‖. Her lewdneſs and cruelty was equal to his, and ſhe contributed not a little to thoſe tragical executions, that filled Rome with blood and tears, under the reign of this tyrant.

The emperor had loved her long before he married her; and it is reported that ſhe employed other arts beſides her beauty to gain his affections: for we read that ſhe prepared him a potion, (of which a poet pretends to give us an account of the ingredients §) which having had a greater effect than ſhe intended, diſturbed his brain, and was the occaſion of that fury which made him commit ſo many extravagancies and cruelties.

Caligula being quite mad with love for his Ceſonia, dreſſed her up ſometimes like a ſoldier, ſhewed her to the troops in this equipage, made

* Sueton. in Cai. † Plin. lib. 9. c. 7. ‡ Dio. lib. 59. Suet. in Cai. cap. 25. ‖ Joſeph. Ant. Judaic. lib. 20. § Juvenal. Sat. 6.

her ride on horſeback by his ſide, and often expoſed her quite naked to his friends, telling them that by ſpeaking a ſingle word, he could make that pretty head of hers leap from her ſhoulders, with which polite compliment he generally concluded his brutal careſſes.

His paſſion for her increaſed after the birth of a daughter he had by her. He was ſo overjoyed to ſee himſelf a father, that he ran into a thouſand ridiculous extravagances. He then, in the moſt formal and ſolemn manner, declared himſelf huſband to Ceſonia, and father to the young princeſs. She was called Julia Druſilla, and the mother was honoured with the title of Auguſt. He obliged every body to make him preſents upon this occaſion *, and moſt baſely received the money that was brought him from all parts for the maintenance of the child. He had her carried into the temple of all the goddeſſes, and placed in the arms of Minerva, to whom he recommended her education, proteſting, that Jupiter and he were equally fathers of Druſilla, and that he left the people to judge which ſhe would have moſt reaſon to be proud of. It is certain that nobody had the leaſt reaſon to doubt whether Caligula was her father or not. The marks of cruelty which ſoon appeared in this girl, were a ſufficient proof of it. Never was there ſeen ſo ill diſpoſed a child: a deviliſh ſort of malice was preſently perceived in her, and ſuch an inclination to cruelty, that it was dangerous to let any children come near her; ſo much did ſhe delight in ſcratching them, pulling out their eyes, and doing them all the miſchief in her power.

As every body knew that Caligula's love was nothing but caprice, and finiſhed as brutally as it began, it was expected that his incl nation for Ceſonia

* Joſeph. Sueton. Dio.

Ceſonia would ſoon give place to ſome other paſſion, and that he would get rid of her as he had done of her predeceſſors. But he was always conſtant to her; which made it generally believed, that ſhe had given him love potions; for he carried it ſo far, that he was not able to live a moment without her *. He gave her leave to diſtribute as ſhe pleaſed, the ſpoils of the Germans, that Galba had defeated. He frequently ſp ke himſelf of the violent love he had for her, and that he was ſurpriſed at it; and in ſome of his furies he was heard to ſay, that rather than not draw the ſecret from her, he was determined to put her to the torture.

If Caius's unaccountable paſſion for Ceſonia, made it generally believed that he was out of his wits, nobody could have the leaſt doubt of it, when they ſaw him commit ſuch other follies, that the hiſtorians, who give us an account of them, would ſcarce be believed, if it was not well known, that men are capable of every bad thing, when the Almighty abandons and leaves them to themſelves. For, not content with being ſuperior to the reſt of mankind, he was reſolved that nothing in heaven or earth ſhould be above him; and therefore inſolently determined to make himſelf a god, though guilty of actions that favoured leſs of the man that of the devil. This fooliſh and wicked fancy, gave the finiſhing ſtroke to his ſenſes, and quite put an end to the little reaſon he had left. He commanded that he ſhould be reſpected as a divinity, that every body ſhould proſtrate themſelves before him, and pay him adoration. Nor had he much difficulty to obtain that from a people, as much given to flattery, as he was to pride and vanity. He often pleaſed himſelf with ſitting in the temples

* Perſ. Sat. 6.

among the ſtatues of the gods, and receiving the homage that was paid to him, with the ſame deference as to the gods themſelves; which impiety was no leſs diſhonourable in the infamous courtiers that paid it him, than it was in him that required it. Sometimes he appeared with the ornaments belonging to the fabulous gods, with wings (for example) at his feet, and the caduceus in his hand, like Mercury; at other times, with a crown like the rays of the Sun, in imitation of Apollo, and often with a ſword and buckler like Mars. He frequently affected to whiſper to the ſtatue of Jupiter, and then pretended to liſten to it, as if the god had been ſpeaking to him, to ſhew that the gods themſelves looked upon him as their equal.

This mad and unaccountable pride, inſpired him with a violent deſire to have his ſtatue placed in the temple of Jeruſalem, imagining that it would exceedingly contribute to his deification; and knowing that the Jews would by no means ſuffer any image in their temple, he thought proper to uſe ſtratagems, and then to employ his authority to the utmoſt; but neither one nor the other ſucceeded: he always found in the Jews a reſiſtance, which zeal for their religion rendered ſo invincibly obſtinate, that neither threats nor promiſes could prevail upon them to admit of ſo monſtrous a novelty, and ſo contrary to their law. All theſe difficulties did not diſcourage him, but ſtill perſiſting in the reſolution of being a god, he called Jupiter his brother; and invited the Moon when it was at the full, to come and lye with him, and would needs have it, that ſhe was his wife. Sometimes he would threaten Jupiter, ſaying, Either kill me, or I will kill thee. At laſt being intirely perſuaded that he was a god, he cauſed a magnificent temple to be built

built in honour of himſelf, in which the victims that were offered up to him, conſiſted of the moſt rare and coſtly birds. There were prieſts inſtituted to him on purpoſe, amongſt whom Ceſonia was conſecrated a prieſteſs. He was reſolved to increaſe the number of them, and by the moſt ridiculous imagination in the world, he cauſed his horſe Incitatus, to be alſo made a prieſt; a worthy pontiff to ſuch a divinity! this however was not the only honour that he conferred upon him: he often beſtowed on him that of inviting him to ſupper, and commanded his oats to be given him in a golden manger. He fitted up a houſe for him with the richeſt furniture, and appointed officers of his houſhold, aſſigning him revenues, wherewithal to entertain ſplendidly the gueſts that ſhould be invited to eat at his houſe; and, that his Incitatus might paſs through all the degrees of honour *, he intended to make him conſul; degrading, by this contempt, the moſt ſublime dignity of the empire.

His cruelty carried him to exceſſes ſo great and barbarous, that Tiberius, in compariſon of him, might paſs for a mild and merciful prince. After having put to death Macron, and Ennia his wife, by way of recompence for having procured him the empire, he ſacrificed to his brutal fury, Silanus, whoſe daughter he had married in Tiberius's reign, and ſo, by an almoſt unprecedented inhumanity, he became the butcher of his father-in-law. He compelled fathers to be preſent and aſſiſt at the execution of their children, without ſo much as permitting them to ſhut their eyes, that they might not behold ſo diſmal a ſpectacle; and, as if he took a particular pleaſure in violating the laws of nature, one of thoſe miſerable fathers being ordered to ſee his ſon put up to death,

* Sueton. in Cai.

and excuſing himſelf on account of an indiſpoſition, the tyrant had the cruelty to ſend him a litter.

The greateſt potentates were as liable to the effects of his fury as the meaneſt people. Ptolomy [c], ſon of king Juba, and couſin-german to his father Germanicus, was deteſtably and moſt unjuſtly murdered. And Mithridates, king of Armenia, was thought to be very happy, when Caligula contented himſelf with only condemning him to a rigorous baniſhment. All thoſe that had been exiled, were put out of their pain, by being ſpeedily executed, becauſe that the emperor happening by chance to aſk one of the perſons that had been long baniſhed, and recalled at the beginning of his reign, how he employed his time during his exile? the other imprudently anſwered, that he was continually praying for the death of Tiberius, and the advancement of Caligula. Caius immediately took it for granted, that all thoſe whom he had ſent into baniſhment, were of the ſame mind, and wiſhed for his death; upon which ridiculous notion, he commanded them all to be maſſacred. Cannius, the philoſopher, was ſo bold as to ſpeak to the emperor with a little more liberty than ordinary, for which he was ordered to prepare for death, and was accordingly put to the ſword; for Caligula was never known to break his word upon thoſe occaſions. The centurion, who came to conduct him to his execution, found him playing at cheſs, with all the calmneſs imaginable, and worthy his profeſſion.

We

[c] Juba married Cleopatra by order of Auguſtus. She was daughter of Marc Antony; and Ptolomy, who was put to death by Caligula, was the fruit of that marriage.

We ſhould never have done, if we were to go into the particulars of his cruelties: they filled Rome with murders.—And though they were monſtrous in their kind, and infinite in number, they could not ſatisfy his inſatiable thirſt after blood. He was frequently heard to ſay, he wiſhed the Roman people had but one head, that he might have the pleaſure of deſtroying them at one ſtroke. As to his abominable lewdneſs, it is not to be read or mentioned without horror, and what elſe could be expected from a prince, that was born with the moſt vicious and depraved appetites? We can only add, that a government, exerciſed with ſuch inſupportable inſolence and barbarity, could not chuſe but give occaſion for innumerable diſcontents and murmurings; nor were there wanting people enough, that were reſolved, at any rate, to get rid of this monſter, who was abandoned by thoſe gods, whom he pretended to equal, and deteſted by all mankind, whom he ruled with tyranny and oppreſſion. Many conſpiracies were formed againſt him, which being either premature or ill concerted, were diſcovered, and expiated by the death of their authors; but Caſſius Choerea, and Cornelius Sabinus, conducted theirs with ſo much cunning and ſecrecy, that Caligula received by their hands, the juſt reward of his wickedneſs.

The news of this aſſaſſination filled Rome with joy, but people were apprehenſive that it might not be true. To put the matter beyond all doubt, the centurion Lupus haſted to the palace, where he found Ceſonia, and the princeſs Druſilla her daughter, weeping over the bleeding corps of Caligula. Ceſonia was demonſtrating the exceſs of her grief, by ſighs and tears in abundance, and in deploring the misfortune of her huſband; ſhe bitterly lamented his obſtinacy, in not taking

the

the advice which ſhe ſaid ſhe had often given him.

Theſe words were variouſly interpreted. Some imagined * that ſhe had adviſed the emperor to ſhed no more blood, but to affect, at leaſt, ſome ſentiments of humanity for the future. Others, on the contrary, were of opinion, that ‡ ſhe had got ſome intelligence of the plot, and had told the emperor that there was no way of preventing its conſequences, but by putting all the conſpirators to death. Be it as it will, Lupus ‖ making his appearaece before Ceſonia, ſhe all bath'd in tears intreated him to come near and aſſiſt her in paying the laſt duty to the emperor's body. But knowing at the ſame time, that Lupus was come with another deſign, preſently altered her tone; and putting on a firm and bold countenance, prepared herſelf for death, intreating him to deprive her of a life that was already odious to her. Lupus, who came with no other intention, did not keep her long in pain. He ran her through the body with his ſword; and afterwards ſeizing the young princeſs, daſh'd out her brains againſt the wall, with a barbarity that agreed very well with his name.

* Joſeph. Antiq. Judaic. lib. 19. ‡ Sueton. in Calig. ‖ Dio. lib. 59.

VALERIA

VALERIA MESSALINA,

Wife of CLAUDIUS.

THERE are vices as well as virtues that ſeem hereditary in families; and the bad examples of parents have ſometimes a ſort of contagious effect upon their children. A lady, whoſe works have been much admired by the publick, has very juſtly obſerved, that a coquetiſh mother has ſeldom daughters that are remarkable for their virtue. Valeria Meſſalina is an unfortunate example, that ſufficiently juſtifies the truth of this maxim. She was the daughter of a vicious woman, whom ſhe not only imitated, but ſurpaſſed in all manner of debaucheries. Her whole life was one continued ſeries of crimes and moſt ſhameful impurities. Her proſtitutions were infamous, publick, and deteſtable. The moſt brutal pleaſures were what ſhe moſt delighted in; and the moſt horrible vices appeared to her under the moſt charming and delightful forms. Virtue was the only object ſhe looked upon with horror, and her reputation was the thing in the world ſhe ſet the leaſt value upon. She forgot her dignity, her birth, and the natural modeſty of her ſex, as well as the fidelity ſhe owed to her huſband, in order to abandon herſelf to brutal paſſions, without the leaſt regard to decency, without fearing to incur the puniſhment of ſuch of her predeceſſors as had purſued the like courſes, without dreading either the cenſures of the world, or the anger of Claudius the emperor. Never was there ſeen ſuch an utter contempt for ſhame and modeſty as in her.

She was daughter of Valerius Meſſala Barbarus and of Lepida, who was accuſed of magick as well

well as proſtitutions, and to have had an inceſtuous commerce with Enobarbus, her brother. From this impure fountain ſprang Meſſalina, who was married to her couſin Claudius, who had had four wives before, viz. Emilia Lepida, whom he divorced without cohabiting with her: Livia Medullina, who died the very day of her marriage: Plantina, by whom he had Druſus, who a few days after having betrothed the daughter of Sejanus, was choaked by an accident; for diverting himſelf with toſſing up a pear and catching it in his mouth, it got ſo far down his throat, that he died before any relief could be had; he had beſides Druſus, a daughter called Claudia, whom he expoſed quite naked before her mother's door, upon a well grounded ſuſpicion that he was not her father: for much the ſame reaſon, he put away Plantina, in order to marry Elia Petina by whom he had Antonia; and alſo divorced her that he might marry Meſſalina his relation, who was by much the worſt of them all. He was then only a private perſon; he had by her a daughter called Octavia, ſince married to Nero, and a ſon called Britanicus, who was born the twentieth day of his empire.

Meſſalina had naturally ſuch a violent paſſion for gallantry, that it was a very difficult matter for her to keep within the narrow bounds of marriage. She had beauty enough to procure gallants, and too little virtue to let them ſuffer long; ſo that ſhe was guilty of innumerable tranſgreſſions of that ſort, beſides cruelty and avarice, to which ſhe was as much inclined: Her power was equally fatal to all that were chaſte and rich. The depravation and corruption of her heart excited the one, and her inſatiable love of money put her upon uſing all manner of cruelty againſt the poſſeſſors of it in order to gratify

tify the other. Debauchery and avarice were then the two poles upon which all the deſires and actions of this empreſs turned. It is hard to conceive the miſerable condition of an empire that is governed by a woman, who has nothing at heart but the gratification of her appetites, whoſe violence, meeting with no reſiſtance, ſpread their fatal influence indifferently upon all thoſe that her caprice inclines her to perſecute. For Meſſalina could not have carried her impudence and tyranny to ſuch lengths, if they had been oppoſed at firſt; but her crimes, being in a manner permitted, ſhe was encouraged to go on in the ſame track. So true it is, that there is nothing ſo bad but a wicked heart is capable of, when ſuffered to proceed without controul.

Claudius was made emperor in a tumultuous manner, by a body of ſoldiers, who thought proper, of their own authority, to advance him to the throne. He was ſeized with a panick at the ſight of this confuſed multitude, who he imagined were come to kill him. He was a heavy and moſt ſtupid man, too thoughtleſs to mind his wife's conduct, and too timid to puniſh her irregularities; of an eaſy, indolent temper, and intirely taken up with the pleaſures of the table and gaming [a], never troubling his head about his

[a] Gluttony was Claudius's predominant paſſion. He made, almoſt every day, ſumptuous entertainments in publick; to which a vaſt number of gueſts were invited, frequently ſix hundred at a time. A ſtory is told of Titus Vinius, of a very noble family, who being one day invited to dine with the emperor, got an opportunity of ſtealing a gold cup from the ſide-board. Claudius was informed of this, and being reſolved to mortify him for the theft, invited him to dinner again the next day with the ſame company; he gave orders that no

his domeſtick affairs nor thoſe of the empire, which ſeemed to him an inſupportable burthen, and which he choſe rather to lay upon his freedmen, a parcel of baſe, artful, and ſelf-intereſted wretches, to whom he gave himſelf up intirely; and who having infinitely more at heart their own private advantage than the honour of their maſter, made him do whatever they pleaſed, in ſuch manner as that Claudius was leſs their ſovereign than their ſlave.

This ſtupid indolence was the occaſion of all Meſſalina's debaucheries. From hence proceedded all thoſe horrible proſtitutions and tyrannical cruelties, that made her ſo formidable to thoſe who were rich or virtuous. At firſt ſhe affected to keep ſome meaſures, and to be a little ſecret in her amours; but finding that nobody offered to give her the leaſt oppoſition, and that ſhe might undertake every thing without fear or reſerve, ſhe ſhook off ſhame and conſtraint, and indulged, to the utmoſt, her infamous paſſions, which by degrees became quite familiar to her. This miſerable habit fortified her mind againſt all the reaſons that might have perſuaded her to obſerve

no veſſels ſhould be put near Vinius but earthenware. This injurious diſtinction was taken notice of by all the gueſts, who were informed of the affair, upon which a great laugh was ſet up at poor Vinius's expence, and all the eyes were fixed upon him. This was a greater mortification than any corporal puniſhment. It is reported that Claudius was ſo fond of lengthening out the entertainments, that for fear any of his gueſts ſhould be prejudiced by the reſtraint they might be under in his preſence, he was reſolved to publiſh an edict, by which every body was permitted to break wind at table, having been informed that one of thoſe that were invited, and having been detained a great while at table, was very ill by not having that liberty.

obſerve ſome rules of decency; ſhe was therefore plunged into the moſt ſcandalous behaviour, which ſhe carried to ſuch a degree *, that the hiſtorians who have tranſmitted theſe facts to us, own that poſterity will ſcarce ever be brought to believe them.

She began her cruelties by the murder of the princeſs Julia, daughter of Germanicus and wife of Vinicius †. This lady, together with her ſiſter Agrippina, had been baniſhed into the iſland of Pontia by order of their brother Caligula, who deprived them of their liberty after having robbed them of their honour.

Claudius, their uncle, being touched with their misfortune, recalled them from their exile, and reſtored to them their eſtates and all their former ſplendour. Theſe illuſtrious perſons appeared again at court, where they held the rank that was due to their birth, their beauty, and their merit. The emperor ſeemed to have a great regard for Julia, and it was obſerved that he did not diſlike to be alone with her, and that they paſſed a conſiderable ſhare of their time together. Meſſalina took theſe marks of the emperor's complaiſance for love, and was preſently alarmed at it ‡. Claudius was weak and ſubject to change; Julia handſome, and perhaps ambitious, and her charms powerful enough to inſpire the emperor with an inclination to marry her. Meſſalina was apprehenſive of this, and conſequently looked upon Julia as her rival. She had alſo another reaſon to hate this princeſs. She was deſcended from the family of the Cæſars, and inherited a ſort of noble haughtineſs, § which would not ſuffer

* Tacit. Ann. 11. Sueton. in Claud. c. 29. † Sueton. in Calig. ‡ Dio. lib. 60. § Sueton. in Claud.

ſer her to ſtoop to thoſe baſe, unworthy flatteries that the empreſs required, (the ordinary ſteps by which people climb up to favour) but which ſhe never could ſubmit to. Theſe were the true provocations; but the empreſs did not fail to accuſe her of many crimes which could not poſſibly be proved; for which notwithſtanding, Julia was baniſhed; and ſoon after, her life was ſacrificed to Meſſalina's jealouſy.

Seneca had alſo his ſhare in the diſgrace *, being accuſed of not having always behaved with the wiſdom of a philoſopher with reſpect to the princeſs Julia, upon which account Claudius baniſhed him into the iſland of Corſica. Seneca (ſtoic as he was †) felt very ſenſibly the ſhame and ſuffering of this exile, of which he preſerved a bitter remembrance, and which broke out into ſatires and invectives againſt Claudius, as ſoon as the emperor's death had ſecured him from further miſchief. Agrippina very narrowly eſcaped undergoing the ſame puniſhment with her ſiſter. Meſſalina could not pardon her beauty and merit, but on the contrary, was reſolved that her death ſhould expiate thoſe heinous crimes; but that of Druſus's daughter, ſeeming the moſt neceſſary of the two, ſhe turned her thoughts intirely that way ‡. This princeſs, who was called Julia, and was alſo niece to Claudius, had the misfortune not to be agreeable to Meſſalina, for which crime ſhe was ſoon put to death. It is this Julia who had contracted ſo intimate a friendſhip with Pomponia Gracina, wife of Plautus; who ſeeing Julia treated with ſo much cruelty, broke her heart with grief, after paſſing her whole life in mourning

* Tacit. Ann. 12 † Senec. Lud. in Claud.
‡ Sueton. in Claud. Dio. lib. 60. Tacit. Ann. 13.

mourning and affliction, nouriſhing her melancholy in ſolitude, far removed from all pleaſures and diverſions, even the moſt innocent. This Pomponia was a lady of very great merit. Her conduct was always ſo regular and unblameable, that it was generally ſuppoſed ſhe had embraced the chriſtian religion *, which the apoſtles St. Peter and St. Paul had already preached at Rome. In effect, ſhe was accuſed of being inclined to the new and foreign ſuperſtitions, as they called the Chriſtian faith,

Meſſalina, having thus cured her jealouſy by the death of her that cauſed it, thought of nothing but how to ſatisfy her appetites. All thoſe who had virtue enough to reſiſt her infamous purſuits, ſoon felt the effects of her cruelty; for ſhe made no ſcruple to accuſe them of treaſon or ſome horrid crime, upon which they were put to death without mercy. Appius Silanus was one of the firſt who died a martyr to his virtue. Claudius had married him to Domitia Lepida, his mother-in-law, and honoured him with his friendſhip and particular eſteem; it muſt be acknowledged he was worthy of it, as well on account of his birth as his extraordinary merit, which had procured him the honour of having for his firſt wife Emilia Lepida, grand-daughter of Auguſtus. Silanus, who was univerſally eſteemed, had the misfortune to be agreeable to Meſſalina, who regarding nothing but her brutal paſſion, was not aſhamed to make him advances to which he had the greateſt averſion.

He repreſented to her, that being ſo nearly related to her as he was, he could not comply with her unlawful deſires, without being guilty of the greateſt crime; but this had no effect upon Meſſalina.

* Baron. ad Ann. Ner. 3.

Meſſalina. The moſt powerful conſiderations are of no weight, when nature and conſtitution are to be forced. The empreſs, whoſe violent deſires were increaſed by difficulties, redoubled her purſuits in proportion to the reſiſtance ſhe met with. Silanus was victorious in this conflict, and Meſſalina had the mortification of having employed all her threats and promiſes to no purpoſe. This was ſufficient to enrage the empreſs beyond all bounds. She could not be diſappointed and affronted in ſo ſenſible a manner, without being full of indignation. She ſwore to deſtroy Silanus, and thereby make herſelf amends for the ſcandalous ſteps ſhe had taken without ſucceſs. She took care not to appear in this affair herſelf, but committed the management of it to Narciſſus, who was intirely devoted to her, and who was full of expedients when a piece of work of that ſort was in hand.

This freedman, who was become exceedingly powerful by his immenſe riches, which he had amaſſed by theft and rapine, and by being the ſcourge of all thoſe that had money, whether at Rome or in the provinces, went eaſily into Meſſalina's deſign of ruining Silanus, whoſe virtue ſhe had not been able to overcome; and becauſe no crime could juſtly be laid to his charge, they were forced to have recourſe to calumny and artifice. Narciſſus came one morning very early into the emperor's chamber, with a melancholy countenance, which he well knew how to put on, and after a good deal of ſighing and lamenting the bad things he had to foretell, he declared to Claudius that he had dreamt he ſaw the traitor Silanus plunge his dagger into the emperor's heart.

Meſſalina upon this, pretended to be extremely terrified, and proteſted that ſhe had frequently dreamt

dreamt the ſame thing of late. Claudius, who was very weak and fooliſh, fell preſently into the ſnare that was laid for him. He was immediately ſeized with a panick, and the more, becauſe at the very time when Meſſalina and Narciſſus were acting their part ſo well *, a perſon came to inform the emperor that Silanns was at the door. This was true, for by a diabolical ſtratagem, orders were ſent him the night before to be at the palace early in the morning, which command Silanus was obliged to obey. Claudius no ſooner heard of his being there, than (being already frighted at what had been told him) he was convinced of the truth of it, and no longer doubted of his being come to put his wicked deſigns in execution. Fear would not permit him to weigh and conſider the matter, nor examine whether Silanus was really guilty or not; ſo he ordered him to be killed that moment. This ſtupid prince imagined he owed his life to Narciſſus, and made him great acknowledgments, for that he was, (ſleeping as well as waking) ſolicitous for his ſafety and welfare. He was not aſhamed to go afterwards to the ſenate, and give them a tedious account of the whole affair.

Silanus's murder ſerved for a ſad example to all honeſt and good people, how precarious their lives were under this phantom of an emperor, who ſerved only as the inſtrument which Meſſalina and his wretched freedmen made uſe of; and the misfortune of Silanus gave them ſufficient warning of what they were to expect. To prevent this, they were reſolved to deprive Claudius of the throne which he filled ſo unworthily, and formed themſelves into a conſpiracy, wherein many ſenators and people of diſtinction were concerned;

* Sueton. in Claud.

concerned; and, that a perſon of weight and conſideration might be at the head of them †, they choſe Furius Camillus Scribonius, governor of Dalmatia, and who had a conſiderable army under his command. This general, flattering himſelf with vain hopes and expectations of no leſs than the throne, permitted the troops to ſalute him as emperor; the grandeur of this high dignity concealing from him the danger to which he expoſed himſelf.

As this hazardous affair was undertaken with precipitation, and conducted without prudence, ſo it came to nothing ‡. Camillus and his accomplices knowing Claudius to be extremely timid, contented themſelves with writing him a letter, full of threats and reproaches, ordering him inſolently to quit the throne which he was totally unfit for, and re-aſſume his private capacity. This ill digeſted deſign was fatal to all thoſe who were concerned in it, ſo that Camillus's joy was as ſhort as Claudius his fear; for juſt as he was deliberating with the ſenate whether he ſhould ſubmit to Camillus, the news arrived of the conſpiracy's being diſſipated of itſelf: the ſoldiers, out of a principle of religion, refuſing to obey their commanders, though they had taken the oath to the new emperor; for when they attempted to take the colours from the place where they were fixed in the ground, no body was able to remove them. As they were very ſuperſtitious, this intimidated the legions ‖, and they immediately concluded that the gods were averſe to their acknowledging the uſurped authority of Camillus, ſo they abandoned him. He immediately fled to an iſland, where was killed

† Tacit. Ann. 12. ‡ Dio. lib. 60. Sueton. in Claud. 35. ‖ Tacit.

killed in the arms of his wife Junia, and expiated his raſhneſs by a tragical end; which may ſerve as a leſſon to ambitious people, and teach them that reaſon ought to baniſh from their minds thoſe falſe notions of grandeur, which vanity and pride are apt to encourage; and that an untimely end is generally the fate of thoſe, whoſe fooliſh ambition puts them upon rebelling againſt the lawful authority.

In the mean time the conſpirators were diligently ſought after; and this plot furniſhed Meſſalina and Narciſſus with an opportunity of gratifying their greedineſs and cruelty; for, affecting an extraordinary zeal for Claudius, they filled Rome with murders, ruin and funerals, ſo that the town never groaned under ſo cruel a ſcourge. Riches became fatal to all thoſe that were poſſeſſed of them; witneſſes were ſuborned to prove them guilty of treaſon, their eſtates confiſcated, and very often they were put to death. Nothing was heard of but horrible torments and bloody executions, ſo that none were ſafe but the pooreſt ſort of people. All the families of diſtinction were reduced to the moſt ſhameful miſery; for the extortions and rapines of Meſſalina and Narciſſus, was a flame that could never be extinguiſhed but by a ſhower of gold. One might then ſee put to the torture, Roman knights * and ſenators, notwithſtanding their rank and dignity. In ſhort, matters were come to ſuch a pitch of miſery, that great numbers choſe to kill themſelves rather than continue to live in ſuch a condition. Cecinna Pætus was one of that number, being encouraged thereto by the example of Aria, his wife, who ſeeing him heſitate about it, plunged a poyniard into her own breaſt before his face, with ſuch a firmneſs of ſoul, as was much admired

* Dio. lib. 60.

admired in thoſe days, and ſtill makes a great noiſe in hiſtory [b].

Meſſalina being become more inſolent by the conſpiracy's not ſucceeding, and by the full liberty ſhe had of practiſing her wickedneſs, indulged ſtill more her vicious appetites, which were now carried to the utmoſt exceſs. Being intoxicated with her power, which was formidable to all the world, ſhe imagined that every thing ought to give way to her, ſo that the leaſt reſiſtance ſhe thought intolerable. In the number of her paramours were Proculus, Urbicus, Trogus, Calpurnianus captain of the guards, Rufus, the ſenator Virgilianus, Montanus a Roman knight, Ceſonius, and multitudes of others, whom a poet calls the rivals of gods *.

Plautinus Lateranus was one of her gallants, as alſo the phyſician Valens, who valued himſelf much upon his eloquence. Vinicius was one of the few that did not carry his complaiſance ſo far. He was of an illuſtrious family, which had given ſeveral conſuls to the republic. He had all the qualities that were neceſſary to form an honeſt and

* Juvenal. Sat. 6.

[b] Cecinna Pætus, a conſulary perſon, being engaged in the conſpiracy of Scribonius, was apprehended and brought to Rome, whither his wife alſo haſtened after him, to try if it was poſſible to ſave his life; but finding that there was no probability of ſucceeding, ſhe endeavoured to perſuade her huſband to prevent the torments that were preparing for him by a voluntary death. But perceiving that he had not the courage to deprive himſelf of a life which he was not, however, long to enjoy, ſhe took a dagger and plunged it into her own boſom; then drawing it out, preſented it to her huſband, ſaying, very calmly, Pætus, it is not very painful. [Pæte nec dolet.]

man †, ſet off with a politeneſs and affability that gained him the eſteem of all the world. Tiberius, who had honoured him with his alliance, gave him alſo many important employments; and Caligula (whoſe odd and capricious temper it was no eaſy matter to pleaſe) could never find any fault with him; ſo judicious and blameleſs had his conduct always been. No body but Meſſalina was capable of depriving the ſenate of one of its moſt illuſtrious members. This empreſs, who put no limits to her pleaſures or deſires, being hurried on by her brutal paſſions, made advances of gallantry to Vinicius, which were not received as ſhe wiſhed and expected. She found in this worthy ſenator that goodneſs which ſhe had diveſted herſelf of. He was too virtuous to defile the bed of his emperor, and therefore conſtantly reſiſted her purſuits, and generouſly deſpiſed her threats; but it coſt him very dear.

A woman who has had the weakneſs to offer favours which have not been accepted, is extremely to be feared. She is capable of all the cruelties that vengeance can inſpire her with. As ſhe cannot bear the ſight of the man, to whom ſhe would have proſtituted her honour and her perſon, ſhe thinks of nothing ſo much as of ruining an object which ſhe imagines eternally reproaches her with her infamous behaviour. Both ſacred and prophane hiſtory furniſhes us with abundance of examples of what a woman thus diſappointed is capable of. Joſeph loſt his liberty for having preſerved his chaſtity inviolable. He was ſtripped of his employments, and ſhut up in a frightful dungeon, for having virtuouſly oppoſed

† Dio. lib. 60. Tacit. Ann. 15.

the impudent and earneſt ſollicitations of Potiphar's wife. And the empreſs * Mary of Arragon, wife of Otho III, cauſed a young count of her court to be cruelly put to death, for having been more faithful to his prince than ſhe was to her huſband. He would never commit the crime to which ſhe had long ſolicited him, which provoked her ſo much, that ſhe accuſed him herſelf to the emperor of having attempted to corrupt her. That over-credulous prince condemned him, too haſtily, to have his head cut off; and ſoon after, was convinced of the injuſtice he had done him.

Such was the fate of Vinicius; he ſurvived his victory but a very little time. Meſſalina, to whoſe power every thing yielded, not at all aſhamed of having taken ſuch ſcandalous meaſures, but enraged at their being unſucceſsful, and not being able to endure that her impudent behaviour ſhould be continually reproached by his virtue, had him put to death. He was poiſoned by her order, and was a tragical inſtance of the danger there was in diſobeying her.

All that has been ſaid of this empreſs is but a ſketch of her abominations, which were without number. She was not content with being plunged in the groſſeſt and moſt infamous debaucheries, (ſuch as proſtituting herſelf to all comers ‡, without being ever able to ſatisfy her inſatiable deſires) but ſhe muſt needs have companions in her lewdneſs; and becauſe example is of great force, and ſeems to authoriſe wickedneſs, ſhe imagined that if there were any other women who could be prevailed on to imitate her, it might in a great meaſure take off the ſcandal. She

* Cuiſpin in Othon. 3 Sigon.

‡ Xiphilin. in Claud.

She tried perſuaſion, but finding that would not do*, compelled ladies of the greateſt quality in Rome to live with her in that ſhameful ſtate of libertiniſm; and becauſe that was not ſufficient, ſhe was reſolved to carry the brutality as far as it would go, and therefore obliged theſe ladies to proſtitute themſelves to the greateſt debauchees that could be found, and that in the preſence of their huſbands, who muſt be ſpectators of their own infamy, and very often accomplices and approvers of it: † for ſhe heaped favours and rewards upon all ſuch as approved of theſe abominable proſtitutions; but on the contrary, thoſe who refuſed to be witneſſes of their ſhame, were ſure to die martyrs to their baſhfulneſs and modeſty. At laſt this monſter of impurity, being weary of all ſorts of vices in the ordinary road, which ſhe had no longer any reliſh for, reſolved to invent ſomething new, to gratify, if poſſible, her unbounded lewdneſs; to this end ſhe ordered a chamber in the palace to be fitted up on purpoſe, and which was to be the ſcene of theſe abominable proſtitutions, where the chaſtity of the moſt conſiderable ladies in Rome was to be violated. On the door of this infamous place ſhe cauſed to be wrote the name of the moſt notorious courtezan of the town, whom ſhe perſonated, and was the firſt to proſtitute herſelf promiſcuouſly to every man that pleaſed to come, and that every night; making a moſt ſhameful profit of her crimes, and brutally exacting the price of thoſe favours ſhe granted ſo eaſily, never retiring till morning. Et laſſata viris, nondum ſatiata, receſſit ‡.

* Aurelius Victor; Epitome in Claud. † Juvenal. Sat. 6. ‡ Juvenal. ibid.

Here amazement ſeems to be exhauſted; for it cannot be conceived how theſe things (which were ſo notorious and publick, that the moſt diſtant nations were not ignorant of them) ſhould be unknown to Claudius only; and that the emperor had nobody about him ſo much in his intereſts, as to let him know the horrible debaucheries of his wife. It is true that he was ſo ſtupid and weak, that Meſſalina made him believe whatever ſhe had a mind, eaſily deſtroying all that any body told him to her prejudice. She had gained ſuch an aſcendancy over him, that no body durſt truſt him with a ſecret upon which their life depended, being aſſured that as ſhe governed him ſo abſolutely, ſhe would ſoon extort it from him: for ſhe had the ſecret of making him approve of every that ſhe did, even of her proſtitutions.

This was evident in the affair of Mneſter, the moſt famous dancer of his time. Meſſalina, who had long ſince acquired a front of braſs, not knowing what it was to bluſh, and always running after new pleaſures, was ſo furiouſly in love with him, that at the emperor's expence ſhe erected ſtatues in honour of him *, which were ſo many monuments of her impudence as well as of the emperor's weakneſs.

But however ardent and earneſt her ſolicitations were to Mneſter to have the ſame complaiſance for her that ſo many others had, ſhe always met with a reſiſtance that was not to be overcome, which did not proceed from his virtue, but his fear of being one day puniſhed for his raſhneſs. Meſſalina was not diſcouraged; ſhe preſſed the comedian, careſſed him, threatened him, and in ſhort attacked him in ſo many ſhapes, that being at laſt conquered by her importunities

portunities, he promiſed to do whatever ſhe pleaſed, if the emperor conſented.

To inſiſt upon ſuch terms as thoſe, was (one would imagine) to require impoſſibilities, becauſe one muſt be out of their wits to ſuppoſe an empreſs ſhould carry her impudence ſo far as to hope for her huſband's conſent in ſuch a caſe. But theſe conditions, however extravagant and difficult to appearance, coſt Meſſalina no trouble at all. She goes directly to Claudius; and after a thouſand deceitful careſſes which ſhe made him, complained that having ſent for Mneſter upon ſome little buſineſs, he had refuſed to obey her: ſhe dwelt much upon the contempt people had for her orders, and pretended to be much afflicted at it, beſeeching the emperor to give directions that more reſpect ſhould be paid her for the future. Claudius, who was ſtupid and fooliſh in the higheſt degree, was immediately convinced of the reaſonableneſs of this diſcourſe; he ſent for Mneſter, and commanded him to obey the empreſs in every particular. Such a poſitive order cured Mneſter of his ſcruples, and diſſipated all his fears. He became Meſſalina's gallant with the approbation of Claudius, which approbation he did not fail to take the advantage of afterwards.

This dancer, however, was not over faithful to Meſſalina, for he was alſo beloved by Poppea. The empreſs being deſirous to keep her gallant to herſelf, was no ſooner informed of this intrigue, than ſhe was determined to deſtroy her rival. This lady was remarkable for her extraordinary beauty, to which none could be compared but that of Sabina Poppea her daughter, who was much handſomer, and at leaſt as debauched as the mother; as if it was decreed that

all of that name were to be lewd and beautiful *. She was accuſed of living in a criminal manner with Valerius Aſiaticus, a ſenator of great diſtinction, who had been twice conſul. This was the crime that Meſſalina reproached Poppea with, and was the more zealous in this affair, becauſe, in the ſame accuſation, ſhe contrived to involve Aſiaticus †, that ſhe might have an opportunity of ſeizing on the famous gardens of Lucullus, which he was in poſſeſſion of, and which ſhe had long coveted. Thus her jealouſy and avarice were both concerned in the deſtruction of Poppea and Aſiaticus.

Suilius and Soſibé, governors of prince Britannicus, joined with her in this piece of iniquity. Thoſe venal wretches accuſed Aſiaticus of having committed adultery with Poppea; and becauſe Meſſalina was aſhamed to puniſh, in others, what ſhe had been ſo often guilty of herſelf, this accuſation was corroborated by another of greater importance. Aſiaticus was charged with having perſuaded the garriſons of Germany to revolt, and of promiſing to put himſelf at the head of them. The calumny was carried yet further, by adding, that Aſiaticus had been the author of Caligula's murder, and that he had boaſted of that horrid aſſaſſination. Meſſalina could not poſſibly have been better ſerved, nor could her wicked agents find out a more plauſible pretence for Meſſalina's vengeance and perſecution, than that of bringing to juſtice a perſon who had murdered an emperor.

Aſiaticus, upon this, was arreſted at Baya: he was loaded with chains, brought to Rome, and conducted to the emperor's palace to be tried. As he was innocent of all theſe crimes, he appeared

* Dio. lib. 60. † Tacit. Ann. 11.

peared before the emperor with ſuch an aſſurance as is always the companion of a good conſcience; and vindicated himſelf ſo effectually, by proving the falſhood of this charge, and putting to confuſion one of his accuſers, by reproaching him with the heinous crimes he had been guilty of, that the emperor, being convinced of his innocence, ſhewed a great diſpoſition to pardon him. Meſſalina herſelf (cruel and implacable as ſhe was) could not forbear giving ſome tokens of humanity upon this occaſion, and was not able to hear him juſtify himſelf with ſo much ſtrength and eloquence, without ſhedding ſome tears. But her compaſſion ſoon gave place to her covetouſneſs; and as ſhe was not a perſon to be wicked by halves, eſpecially when the queſtion was to gratify her darling paſſions, ſhe charged Vitellius (as ſhe went out of the emperor's chamber where this farce was acted) to be ſure not to let the pretended criminal eſcape. Meſſalina could not have given this commiſſion to a man more capable of executing it: ſhe was well acquainted with his character, for he had frequently given her ſufficient proofs of his abilities in caſes where baſeneſs and perfidiouſneſs were neceſſary. This corrupt and flattering courtier, ſeeing that Claudius heſitated whether he ſhould condemn or acquit Aſiaticus, approached the emperor, and with a diabolical malice affected a falſe compaſſion for the priſoner, with whom he ſaid he had always lived in the ſtricteſt friendſhip. He mentioned every thing in his favour that he thought capable of touching the emperor, and dwelt upon the many conſiderable ſervices he had done the republick, particulaaly to Claudius's family; afterwards, letting drop ſome artificial tears, he intreated the emperor, in the name of

Aſiaticus, to give him leave to chuſe what kind of death he liked beſt, ſince he deſired no other favour.

Claudius, believing that Vitellius ſpoke this at the inſtigation of Aſiaticus, granted his requeſt; and this unfortunate ſenator, being thus condemned, choſe to be bled to death, and ſo had all his veins opened; after proteſting that it would not have grieved him ſo much to have loſt his life by ſome of Tiberius's artifices, or the cruelty of Caligula, as by the cunning ſtratagems of a wicked woman, and a parcel of vile mercenary ſycophants.

Poppea did not long ſurvive Aſiaticus, for Meſſalina ſo terrified her with threats, that ſhe choſe rather to die once for all by her own hand, than remain in continual fear and apprehenſion. The accuſers of Aſiaticus, who had not proſecuted him for nothing, were amply rewarded for their pains. Criſpinus, captain of the guards, received a great ſum of money, together with the ornamens and privileges of the prætors, for having arreſted him at Baya. Meſſalina made Soſibé a very conſiderable preſent; and the fineſt employments in the empire were beſtowed upon Vitellius, who preſerved them by the ſame methods by which he had acquired them, that is to ſay, by all ſorts of baſeneſs and wickedneſs, and eſpecially flattery, which he carried ſo far as to have always about him * one of Meſſalina's ſhoes, which he was not aſhamed to kiſs continually in publick, as if it had been ſomething ſacred.

After all that we have ſaid of Meſſalina, it might be thought impoſſible for her to go greater lengths in wickedneſs that ſhe had hitherto done, and

* Sueton. in Vitell.

and that there was no new crime for her to commit: but we have yet one to ſpeak of which was without example. She took it in her head to marry publickly C. Silius, with whom ſhe was exceſſively in love, and ſo to have two huſbands at once. Silius was of one of the moſt illuſtrious families of Rome; and never was there ſeen a handſomer man. He was appointed conſul for the next year. His wife was Junia Silana, a lady of great diſtinction and merit, and Meſſalina, in purſuance of her ridiculous ſcheme, obliged him to put her away, in order to ſupply her place.

Though this ſhameleſs empreſs had long ſince bid adieu to every ſymptom of decency, yet ſhe could not but foreſee that this monſtrous marriage muſt needs make a great noiſe throughout all the empire. This reflection induced her to prepare people's minds for a thing ſo extraordinary, by introducing † the cuſtom of womens having ſeveral huſbands; imagining that, however ſtrange it might appear at firſt, example would ſoon authoriſe and make it familiar; and that nobody could reaſonably blame her for doing what many others did as well as ſhe. But afterwards, conſidering that people would never be reconciled to ſuch a novelty, becauſe of the great and many inconveniencies it muſt be attended with, and being weary of ordinary pleaſures, which were become inſipid by being ſo eaſily obtained, ſhe was reſolved not to deny herſelf any longer the ſatisfaction ſhe hoped for from this marriage, but to accompliſh it let what will happen, without giving herſelf any trouble about the conſequences; not doubting but ſhe ſhould get over it as well as ſhe had done innumerable

† Tacit. Ann. 11. Xiphilin. Suet. in Claud.

crimes which ſhe had been guilty of. Taking it therefore for granted that there was nothing too difficult for her to perform, ſhe heaped all ſorts of favours, riches, and honours upon her new huſband that was to be. The ſervants of the emperor, as well as the moſt magnificent and coſtly furniture in the palace, were all ſent to Silius's houſe; and nothing was wanting but the title of emperor.

Silius, however, in the midſt of all this pomp and ſplendour, was far from being eaſy in his mind: he foreſaw the peril to which he expoſed himſelf by this raſh and hazardous enterprize. Fear of puniſhment made him even heſitate for ſome time between duty and ambition; but at laſt he ſhut his eyes againſt all danger; whether it was that he was in hopes, by ſome means or other, to eſcape the chaſtiſement he deſerved, or that he was apprehenſive of being ruined if he ſhould diſoblige Meſſalina, or, in ſhort, that being weary of a private life, he was reſolved to obtain the throne if poſſible; be it as it will, he was the firſt to preſs Meſſalina to conclude the marriage, and to celebrate it publickly.

All the uſual ſolemnities were punctually obſerved. The contract was perfected in due form *. Witneſſes were called in, to ſign it; the ſolemn clauſe that they married to have children was not forgot; but the miracle of all was, that Claudius ſhould ſign the contract himſelf; Meſſalina making him believe that all this was performed only to turn away from him ſome unfortunate events with which he was threatened, (and which were foretold ſhould befal him) in order to make them light upon Silius. Claudius going into the country a few days after, gave them an opportunity of celebrating their nuptials with

* Tacit. Ann. 11.

with great magnificence; Meſſalina appeared dreſſed like a bride, ſacrificed to the gods for the proſperity of her marriage; and after a ſuperb entertainment which ſhe gave the gueſts, at which ſhe was placed (according to the ceremony) next to Silius, and to whom ſhe ſhewed all the marks of tenderneſs and affection that ſhe could have done if he had been her real huſband, ſhe retired to her new huſband's houſe, and lived with him as familiarly as if ſhe had been with Claudius.

This hiſtory would certainly paſs for a fable, if the veracity of thoſe who have tranſmitted it to us, could be called in queſtion; and Tacitus, who is one of them, ſays he is perſuaded that poſterity will not eaſily give credit to it. But what is moſt wonderful, is, that Claudius, who was then at Oſtia, (and whither Meſſalina excuſed herſelf from going on pretence of ſome indiſpoſition) knew nothing of what paſſed, though every thing was done in preſence of the three orders; and in all probability this piece of unprecedented aſſurance would have paſſed as the reſt had done, if Narciſſus had not taken care to inform the emperor of it.

This favourite, as well as many of the other freemen, had abandoned the intereſts of Meſſalina, after ſhe had put to death one of their fraternity named Polybé, whom ſhe had formerly loved but too well. This was looked upon by them as a ſpecimen of what they had to fear, and united them againſt the empreſs, upon whoſe friendſhip they ſaw plainly they could never depend. They therefore reſolved to ruin her, and waited only for a fair opportunity of doing it effectually. Eſpecially Caliſtes, Pallas, and Narciſſus, thought it incumbent on them to inform the emperor of this marriage of Meſſalina with Silius, for fear he ſhould come to know of it by ſome

ſome other means, and then they would have been liable to puniſhment for ſo criminal a ſilence; beſides, that they plainly ſaw their lives were not in ſafety if Silius ſhould ſucceed in his enterprize. Pallas and Caliſtes, however, ſoon changed their opinion, and were determined to try if it was not poſſible to prevail on Meſſalina to return to her duty, and break off her infamous commerce with Silius. This reſolution was as ſoon dropped as taken, and another ſucceeded. On the one hand, they were convinced of the abſolute power the empreſs had over Claudius, and that ſhe could make him believe what ſhe pleaſed, if ſhe could but be admitted to ſpeak to him a moment; and on the other hand, being perſuaded that, as ſhe had been accuſtomed all her life to ſuch an unbounded libertiniſm, it was abſolutely impoſſible for her to break herſelf of it, they reſolved not to meddle in it one way or other: Pallas, becauſe he was afraid of undoing himſelf in endeavouring to ruin the empreſs; and Caliſtes, becauſe he knew, by the long experience he had gained in the preceding reigns, that the ſure way of maintaining one's power and credit in courts, is by practiſing the art of diſſimulation, and not ſetting up to give advice. Thus theſe ſelf-intereſted and baſe favourites preferred their ſafety to their duty; the fear of loſing their fortune quite ſilenced them, and they thought it the beſt way to leave the management of this affair to Narciſſus.

As for him, he perſiſted conſtantly in his deſign of informing the emperor of this marriage of his wife with Silius; and his only care was how to keep it ſecret from Meſſalina *. Claudius had two concubines that were more in his good graces than moſt other people, who being flattered

* Tacit. Ann. 11.

flattered and careſſed, and promiſed great rewards by Narciſſus, undertook to open the affair to Claudius. They went to him to Oſtia, and throwing themſelves at his feet, told him, with ſeeming fear and conſternation, that Silius, who was become huſband to Meſſalina by a monſtrous and treaſonable impudence, thought of nothing leſs than dethroning him; that at Rome every thing was in confuſion, and that Silius wanted very little of being emperor; to which they added, that Narciſſus had charged them with this commiſſion. Claudius, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and fear, ſent for Narciſſus, who was alſo at Oſtia, and interrogated him as to this marriage. This was what he expected, ſo affecting a melancholy countenance and voice, confeſſed that hitherto indeed he had concealed from him the horrible adulteries and proſtitutions of his wife with Valens, Plautius, and innumerable others, to whom ſhe had intirely abandoned herſelf, and thereby affronted her huſband and her emperor in the moſt injurious and outrageous manner, becauſe he was unwilling to acquaint the whole empire with the ſhame and diſgrace which this abominable and ſcandalous behaviour brought upon Cæſar's family; and beſides, he had been ſtill in hopes that Meſſalina would repent of her wickedneſs; but ſince the diſhonour was now publick, that Meſſalina ſhewed no ſigns of repentance, and that he himſelf deſired to be acquainted with his wife's conduct, he was no longer at liberty to diſguiſe the truth, nor to conceal the empreſs's marriage with Silius, which had been celebrated in the ſolemneſt manner before the whole town. Geta, captain of the guards, and Turanius, commiſſary for the receipt of corn, confirmed what Narciſſus had ſaid; and in ſhort, every body adviſed the emperor to provide for his ſafety. The

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emperor was at firſt ſo terrified, that he thought himſelf ruined beyond redemption. He made what haſte he could to the camp, but not thinking himſelf ſafe there, he enquired every moment whether Silius was not yet emperor.

In the mean time Meſſalina, being intoxicated with her wild and diſorderly pleaſures, was in the houſe of Silius, her new huſband, with whom, in ſpight of all the crimes ſhe was guilty of, ſhe enjoyed herſelf as calmly as if ſhe had had nothing to fear. She had aſſembled a troop of favourites and women as debauched as herſelf, to a maſquerade. They celebrated the feaſt of Bacchus with all the impure ceremonies and infamous geſtures which were practiſed at the Bacchanals. Valens was one of this ſcandalous party; and this vicious phyſician having climbed to the top of a high tree, cried out, that he foreſaw ſome dreadful calamity that was to happen to them from Oſtia. This was literally verified; for ſoon after, the people came from all parts to give them notice that Claudius, being fully informed how matters were, was coming from Oſtia to puniſh the horrid behaviour of his wife as well as that of her wicked accomplices. Cæſar's approach ſtruck this inſolent troop with ſuch a panic, that they all fled different ways: Meſſalina retired into the gardens of Lucullus, of which ſhe had robbed Aſiaticus; and Silius, affecting a falſe ſecurity, went to the council to perform the functions of his employment; though in reality his apprehenſions were as great as the danger that threatened him.

As for Meſſalina, ſhe was indeed terribly alarmed, but yet did not deſpair of extricating herſelf if ſhe could but ſpeak a few words to Claudius, ſo much did ſhe rely on the ſtupidity of the emperor. This would not be the firſt time

time ſhe had brought herſelf off by making notorious lies paſs for truths. She had the ſecret of lulling him aſleep by her artful careſſes, which ſeldom failed of producing the deſigned effect.

In order to move him to compaſſion, ſhe ſent Britannicus and Octavia to meet him, and intreated the great veſtal Vibidia to accompany them *. She herſelf followed on foot from one end of Rome to the other, abandoned by every body, for none were touched with her misfortunes, on account of the abominable life ſhe had led. At laſt finding, at the fartheſt gate of the town, a gardener's tumbril, ſhe got into it, and went to meet the emperor, whom ſhe hoped to mollify, if ſhe could poſſibly procure an audience. Narciſſus, who knew very well of what importance it was that ſhe ſhould not ſee Claudius, (who in that caſe would certainly have pardoned her) very cunningly contrived that they ſhould not meet. He took care to accompany the emperor in his coach, and talked of nothing all the way but Meſſalina's proſtitutions. Vitellius and Cecinna, who were alſo in the coach, kept a profound ſilence, and ſpoke not a word either for or againſt her, that they might not incur her diſpleaſure if ſhe came off victorious; and that it might not be ſaid they approved of her debaucheries if they undertook to juſtify her.

At laſt Meſſalina appeared, and loudly inſiſted that the mother of Britannicus and Octavia ſhould have an opportunity of ſpeaking to the emperor. This was a critical moment to Narciſſus; and it is certain that his fate and that of Meſſalina depended on that inſtant. This ſubtle courtier, who knew the conſequence of it, did all he could to hinder the emperor from hearing her, and amuſed him with reading memoirs which contained

* Tacit. Ann. 11.

tained the hiſtory of Meſſalina's conduct, until ſhe and her children were left far behind. Vibidia however, notwithſtanding all Narciſſus's endeavours, found means to ſpeak to Claudius. She repreſented to him with great liberty, that he ought not to take for granted all that had been told him of Meſſalina; that theſe reports were ſo many impoſtures which her enemies had invented to blacken her in his opinion, and ruin her. That at leaſt it was but reaſonable ſhe ſhould be heard before ſhe was condemned. Narciſſus, who was afraid this veſtal might change the emperor's mind, which he knew was irreſolute enough, interrupted her very ſmartly, and told her that Meſſalina would be heard, but that a veſtal as ſhe was ſhould mind her own buſineſs.

Claudius was all this while quite dumb, and to ſee him, one would have imagined that he was no way intereſted in what paſſed. But as ſoon as he arrived at Rome, Narciſſus very cunningly conducted him to Silius's houſe, which he found magnificently adorned with the moſt ſumptuous furniture of his palace, and which had belonged to the Druſuses and Neroes, his anceſtors. He then fell into a rage proportionable to his ſhame, and immediately ordered Silius, and ſome of the other corrupters of Meſſalina, to be put to death. Lateranus owed his ſafety to the merit and ſervices of his uncle; and Ceſonius was pardoned for reaſons that modeſty will not permit us to mention, and for which he deſerved, long ago, to have loſt his life.

Mneſter pleaded the abſolute command of Claudius to obey Meſſalina in every particular; and proteſted that he ſhould never have been guilty, if he had not been ſo by order of the emperor; that being forced to obey, he became criminal with regret and by neceſſity, far from having

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thoſe ambitious and ſelf-intereſted views which Meſſalina's other lovers had, who did not diſhonour the emperor but with an intent to aggrandize their own families, or to gratify their paſſions.

Claudius was a little ſtaggered by theſe reaſons, and without doubt would have pardoned Mneſter, if all the freedmen had not repreſented to him, that he ought not to forgive a crime in him that had coſt ſo many others their lives; and that death ought to expiate his aſſurance in having defiled the emperor's bed; ſince in effect, he had committed adultery with Meſſalina, whether it was by his conſent or by force; ſo he underwent the ſame fate with the reſt.

While all this was going on, Meſſalina, who had retired to the gardens of Lucullus, was in terrible agitations. Sometimes ſhe deſpaired of being ever able to obtain her pardon, and at other times flattered herſelf that ſhe might probably be forgiven, by the help of thoſe careſſes that had ſo often re-eſtabliſhed her in the good graces of Claudius. It is certain that if Narciſſus had not haſtened the death of the empreſs, and thereby put it out of Claudius's power to forgive her, he would have done it: for, being returned to his palace, and finding a good ſupper ſerved up, he forgot, in his wine, all that had been told him of Meſſalina, and commanded that ſome body ſhould go and tell that miſerable wretch (that was the term he made uſe of) to come and juſtify herſelf the next morning.

The empreſs's vindication of herſelf would infallibly have been the gaining of her cauſe, and the ruin of her accuſers. Narciſſus was perſuaded that his life depended on the death of Meſſalina, and that he ſhould be undone if ſhe was admitted to an audience of the emperor, be-

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cauſe he knew that Claudius would never have the reſolution to condemn her if ſhe made her appearance before him, in which caſe ſhe would have found no difficulty in making him believe whatever ſhe pleaſed; and therefore reſolved to riſque every thing. He went out of the emperor's chamber, and meeting ſome centurions, ordered them in the emperor's name, to go and put Meſſalina to death; and Evodius, a freedman belonging to Claudius, was commanded to aſſiſt at the execution. They went immediately to the gardens of Lucullus, where they found Meſſalina lying upon the ground in ſuch circumſtances as would have moved pity. Lepida, her mother, was with her, not being willing to quit her in her misfortunes, though the empreſs had behaved very undutifully to her in her proſperity. Her mother, knowing how many and heinous her crimes had been, exhorted her to prevent, by a voluntary death, the cruel one, which no doubt was preparing for her. But Meſſalina, who had been ſo long accuſtomed to pleaſure and vice as to be utterly incapable of any ſentiments of honour, (for ſuicide was ſo accounted among the Romans) could do nothing but ſhed tears, and bewail her miſerable condition.

In the mean time the ſoldiers broke open the doors of the garden, and the captain preſented himſelf before her without ſpeaking a word. Evodius, who had been a ſlave, did not ſhew her the ſame reſpect, but on the contrary, affronted her, in the moſt ſenſible manner, brutally reproaching her * with all the ſhameful actions of her life, and mortified her with a rudeneſs and inſolence that was worthy of his former condition. This treatment ſoon gave the empreſs to underſtand

* Tacit. Ann. 11.

underſtand that there were no hopes left for her, ſo ſhe would have killed herſelf with a ponyard, which her trembling hand frequently applied to her boſom, and as often refuſed to do her that office; but the centurion, without waiting any longer, ſpared her the trouble, and ran his ſword through her body.

Claudius was at ſupper when the account of her death was brought him. The meſſenger did not inform him whether ſhe died by her own hand or another perſon's, nor did he give himſelf the trouble to aſk any queſtions about it: on the contrary, as if they had told him the moſt indifferent news in the world, he called for ſome wine, and continued to eat and drink very heartily. The next day, he ſhewed no tokens either of joy or grief; nay, ſo great was his ſtupidity, and ſo little did he remember what had happened, that one day being at table, he aſked why the empreſs did not come *.

Such was the miſerable end of Meſſalina, whoſe life was one continued ſeries of monſtrous crimes. And here it muſt be obſerved, that ſhe was maſſacre'd in the gardens of Lucullus, which ſhe had violently taken away from Aſiaticus, and in order to obtain them, had moſt barbarouſly murdered him. As if the Almighty would revenge the death of that virtuous man by that of his perſecutrix, and in the very place which had been the object of her inſatiable avarice: in like manner as he had formerly revenged the murder of Naboth by the dreadful death of Jezabel, who, in order to ſeize a vineyard that belonged to him, ſuborned falſe witneſſes to accuſe him of crimes which he was innocent of, and in conſequence of which he was condemned to die; but God ſo ordered

* Sueton. in Claud.

ordered it by a juſt judgment, that ſhe was maſſacre'd herſelf in that very vineyard. Theſe terrible inſtances of the divine wrath ought to teach thoſe who have power, never to make uſe of it to deprive others of their right, becauſe they are not able to defend themſelves; for, ſooner or later, heaven will revenge theſe acts of injuſtice and oppreſſion.

AGRIPPINA.

AGRIPPINA,

Second Wife of CLAUDIUS.

NOT one of the empreſſes has made more noiſe than Agrippina. Every thing concerning her was remarkable; her birth, her beauty, her faults, her good qualities, and her misfortunes. She was daughter of Germanicus*, the delight of the Roman people, and of Agrippina, grand daughter of Auguſtus, who was delivered of her in a town which was afterwards called the colony of Agrippina, and now Cologne. She was obſerved to have a double tooth on the right ſide, which Pliny looked upon as a certain preſage of great fortune †.

Agrippina had received from nature, all the advantages of body and mind, that were neceſſary to render her a moſt accompliſhed princeſs, if ſhe had not degraded them by making a very bad uſe of them. Her beauty ‡ yielded to none in Rome. She had a majeſtick air, her manners noble, a lively and enterprizing wit, capable of the greateſt undertakings, which ſhe gave proof of in the ſtrength and delicacy of thoſe curious memoirs, which ſhe compoſed upon her own adventures ‖, and which were of no ſmall ſervice to Tacitus the hiſtorian, when he wrote his annals. But, on the other hand, her avarice was inſatiable §, her jealouſy ſuch as made her capable of the moſt cruel revenge; and eſpecially, her ambition was without bounds, which was the principal, and perhaps the only cauſe, of all her

* Tacit. Ann. 12. † Plin. hiſt. nat. cap. 8. ‡ Xiphil. in Claud. ‖ Voſſ. Hiſt. Lat. l. 1. § Plin. lib. 7. c. 8.

her crimes and misfortunes. Daughter, ſiſter, niece, wife, and mother, of emperors or Cæſars[a]; from her cradle ſhe had ſo violent an inclination to reign, that ſhe could ſet no limits to it. This vice was ſo interwoven into her very nature, that it corrupted all her actions, and produced, in great abundance, all ſorts of crimes.

Agrippina was bred up with her grandmother Antonia, who by her irreproachable conduct, might have ſerved her as a model of virtue; but this excellent * princeſs, who educated the children of her ſon Germanicus along with her own, and endeavoured to inſpire them with ſentiments of honour and goodneſs, ſoon perceived that all her labour was in vain. She had the mortification of finding her grand daughters capable of the moſt infamous actions, at an age when they could not be thought ſuſceptible of any paſſions; but vice made its appearance before their reaſon began to dawn †, and they ſullied their tender years by committing the moſt horrible inceſt with their brother Caligula; ſo true is it, that modeſty, prudence, and virtue, are not always the fruits of birth, good example, or inſtruction; it is too often ſeen, that theſe virtues are more owing to conſtitution than any thing elſe.

Agrippina was very young when her mother brought to Rome the aſhes of Germanicus, which melancholy object opened afreſh the wound which the death of that accompliſhed prince had made in the hearts of the Romans, and did not

* Eut. Suet. in Cai. † Dio. lib. 59.

[a] Agrippina was great grand daughter to Auguſtus, grand daughter to Agrippa, daughter to Germanicus, wife to Claudius, ſiſter to Caligula, and mother of Nero.

not a little contribute to the extraordinary affection which they had, and always preſerved, for his children. Tiberius, jealous as he was of the merit of this great man, (and of whoſe death he was not innocent) yet affected a deep ſorrow for his death, which he pretended to regret as much as poſſible; and taking upon himſelf the care of his children, invited Caius Caligula to live with him; and as ſoon as Agrippina was of a proper age, married * her to Domitius Enobarbus.

This nobleman, beſides his illuſtrious birth, had the honour of being related to Cæſar's family, and therein conſiſted all his merit; for, excepting that, the ſun never ſhone upon a more wicked man. Perfidious, brutal, cruel, ſtained with murders, adulteries, and even the moſt horrible inceſt with his ſiſter Lepida; in ſhort, loaded with all ſorts of crimes †. He owned, himſelf, that from his marriage with Agrippina, nothing could ever ſpring but what would be pernicious to the republick; and, in effect, no good was to be expected from ſo deteſtable a man, and a woman ‡ whoſe vice and lewdneſs might be dated almoſt from her cradle.

This prediction was but too well verified by the birth of Nero, who was born at Antium, and came into the world the feet foremoſt. He was the cruelleſt ſcourge that could afflict the empire. They deliberated a great while what they ſhould call him, and Agrippina, having deſired Caligula, who reigned at that time, to give him a name, the emperor, out of deriſion, would needs have him called Claudius, becauſe he was then the ſport of the court ‖. This vexed Agrippina

* Tacit. Ann 4. † Sueton. in Ner. ‡ Plin.
‖ Suet. in Ner.

pina extremely, and ſhe had him named after his father Domitius.

Agrippina having ſet out in the world with committing inceſt, nobody could expect that ſhe ſhould prove an example of chaſtity; neither did ſhe bely the bad opinion that every body had of her, for ſhe lived with her brother Caius in an infamous familiarity *. Tigillinus was baniſhed for having carried on an amour with her, and Lepidus, her couſin german, and brother-in-law, was, according to Dion, put to death for having received criminal favours from her.

Lepidus, without doubt, did not deſerve a leſs puniſhment, for he was bound to Agrippina by ſo many tyes, that he ought to have behaved more honourably towards her; but this, however, was not the fault that made him ſo blameable in the eyes of Caligula; for the emperor, in putting him to death, intended to puniſh his ambition more than his debaucheries: for Lepidus deſigned to pave himſelf a way to the throne, through Agrippina's means †, and ſhe endeavoured to make Lepidus her friend with the ſame view. This deſign coſt thoſe who were engaged in it very dear, for Lepidus had his head cut off ‡, and Agrippina had the mortification of being forced to carry the urn, wherein were incloſed the aſhes of her lover, upon her ſhoulders, from the place of execution to Rome. This was not the only ſuffering ſhe underwent; Caius, being diſguſted at her and his other ſiſters, railed at them moſt bitterly, reproached them with their ſhameful and ſcandalous crimes, publiſhed their love letters, which inſtructed the whole town in their intrigues, and baniſhed them into the iſland of

* Tacit. Ann. 14. † Rutil. in itiner. Lepid.
‡ Dio. lib. 59.

of Pontia, after having conſecrated, to Jupiter the Revenger, three poniards, which he pretended they had prepared in order to aſſaſſinate him.

The death of Caligula put an end to Agrippina's exile. Her uncle Claudius recalled her and her ſiſters, and reſtored to them all that their father (who was dead) had bequeathed them, and which Caligula had ſeized upon. It did not appear that Agrippina's baniſhment had in the leaſt diminiſhed her ambition, which was ſtill predominant; on the contrary, the magnificence and ſplendour of the court, increaſed her thirſt after power to ſuch a degree, that ſhe ſet no bounds to it. This devouring paſſion extinguiſhed what few ſentiments of honour ſhe had left, ſo that ſhe reſolved to employ all ſorts of means to advance her fortune. The firſt project ſhe went upon, was to try all poſſible arts to make the emperor her uncle in love with her. With this view, ſhe took care to diſplay all her charms, which this weak prince was the more ſuſceptible of, as ſhe did not fail to heighten them by ſuch artful and engaging ways, as few people would have been able to reſiſt, and which ſhe was perfect miſtreſs of. Claudius had not penetration enough to ſee into her intentions, being too ſtupid to comprehend that all this was practiſed to promote ſome deep deſign. This, however, was not the only method Agrippina took to obtain her ends, for her policy ſoon put her upon other ways. She was apprehenſive that ſhe ſhould not be able of herſelf to gain her point, for which reaſon ſhe thought it neceſſary to look out for ſuch a huſband, as was capable of giving her all the aſſiſtance ſhe ſtood in need of, and who had ambition and courage enough to ſeize the empire in caſe of Claudius's death. Galba ſeemed a very fit perſon for this purpoſe:

his important employments, high birth, and great credit, made him conſiderable at court, and in the whole empire. But he making but an indifferent return for all the advances ſhe made him, ſhe employed her thoughts another way, and Criſpus Paſſinus was the perſon ſhe pitched upon. He had neither the nobility nor the power of Galba; but, to make amends, he was extremely rich, and ſhe did not doubt, but this treaſure would be of great ſervice to her in her principal ſcheme; for at all times, money has been the chief ſpring in important undertakings. She married him then; but had the ſecret of getting rid of him, as ſoon as ſhe had poſſeſſed herſelf of his wealth. This furniſhed her, very à propos, with the means of gratifying her taſte for luxury, and appearing every where with diſtinction, which, till then, ſhe had not been able to do, becauſe ſhe inherited but the third part of her firſt huſband's eſtate, which was but ſmall. The figure ſhe now made, brought her into great credit at court; but on the other hand it alarmed Meſſalina, and it was not very ſafe to provoke her. Agrippina, who had too good ſenſe, not to be aware of what ſhe expoſed herſelf to, choſe rather to diſſemble than riſque her life; ſo ſhe thought beſt to affect great reſervedneſs and circumſpection, when ſhe was with the emperor, and before witneſſes; reſerving her flatteries and careſſes, which were ſcarce ever innocent, for private opportunities.

It was not only with regard to Claudius that ſhe was prodigal of her favours, for ſhe beſtowed them very liberally to all that could be of any ſervice to her in her projects, and was not long before ſhe reaped the fruits of them; for Meſſalina being killed, Caliſtes, Narciſſus, and Pallas, were each of them determined to have the ho-

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nour of procuring the emperor another wife. The three favourites had got the better of Claudius ſo intirely, that he had not the power nor reſolution to contradict the will and pleaſure of theſe inſolent miniſters; who having the ſovereign authority thus veſted in them, ordered every thing as they pleaſed, without reſpecting either the laws or the emperor, who blindly gave himſelf up to them in all ſorts of affairs; and they took care to keep him in this ſtate of indolence, that they might have the ſole direction and management of every thing. Pallas was intendant of his exchequer, Narciſſus was his ſecretary, and Caliſtes gave anſwers to the petitions that were preſented to him. In theſe three important poſts, they became a ſcourge to the whole empire, for as they had raiſed themſelves by all ſorts of baſe actions, they performed the functions of their reſpective employs with the greateſt inſolence. People were obliged to pay them, with all poſſible deference and reſpect, that homage which was not given to the emperors themſelves, without great regret. It was to them that the moſt conſiderable of the ſenators, as well as all others of the higheſt quality, paid their court aſſiduouſly, and in the moſt ſervile manner, to preſerve their ſubſtance and their lives; for they were become the arbiters of every bodies fortunes. Children did not enjoy the inheritance of their parents, but when they were pleaſed to permit it. All the provinces groaned under the weight of the taxes which they laid on them, and only the leaſt part of which was brought into the emperor's coffers. Their houſes were burſting with the wealth which they had acquired by rapine and oppreſſion. In ſhort, they knew ſo well how to fatten themſelves at the ex-

pence of others, that they were each of them richer than Crœſus.

After Narciſſus and Caliſtes had recommended to Claudius, the one Petina, and the other Lollia, Pallas ſpoke for Agrippina. We have taken notice of the reaſons he alledged in her favour: they were ſuch as determined Claudius to prefer her to the other two; but there remained one obſtacle, and that was the near relationſhip that was between them, for it was quite a new thing among the Romans, for an uncle to marry his niece; ſuch an alliance was always reckoned the forerunner of ſome misfortune to the empire; for which reaſon, it would never have gone down with Claudius, if Vitellius, the moſt ſervile wretch in the world, had not helped him to get over all ſcruples, with his uſual artifice and cunning.

This flattering courtier, perceiving that the emperor heſitated, about concluding his marriage with Agrippina, becauſe of the nearneſs of their kindred, repreſented to him, that there was no need of all theſe difficulties, for that ſovereign princes had nothing to do with the laws that were made for private perſons; and that, for reaſons of ſtate, the ordinary rules and cuſtoms were frequently to be diſpenſed with; but if he ſtill perſiſted in theſe ſcruples, he adviſed him to leave the matter to the ſenate, the proper interpreters of the laws, and if they decided it for the marriage, there could be no longer any room for doubts. Claudius conſented to this propoſal, and the ſenate was aſſembled for that purpoſe. Vitellius did not fail to haſten thither, and as ſoon as the affair was brought upon the carpet exaggerated the neceſſity of the emperor's taking another wife, to aſſiſt him in his domeſtick af-

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fairs *, and that he might be more at leiſure to attend thoſe of the empire. He added, that in his opinion, there was no occaſion to deliberate a moment, upon the choice of a proper perſon, ſince Agrippina was the only one that could reaſonably be propoſed to him, becauſe of the great qualities that Cæſar's wife ought to be poſſeſſed of, and which were not to be met with but in her. That, as to her being the emperor's niece, no great ſtreſs ought to be laid upon that, the marriage being ſo neceſſary for the good of the republick, to which the laws ſhould always give place. That it would not be the only caſe in which things of that nature had been permitted, ſince formerly, the marriage of couſin germans was forbid, and yet at preſent nothing was more common. The ſenate made a decree conformable to the advice of Vitellius, and the inclinations of Agrippina, who now became the wife of Claudius, and was advanced to that throne, which ſhe had ſo ardently wiſhed for. She ſignalized the beginning of her reign, by an action that was agreeable to all the orders of the town, which was the recalling of Seneca, the philoſopher, from the baniſhment to which Claudius had condemned him (for a crime which was not very conſiſtent with the gravity of his profeſſion) and made choice of him to be governor to Domitius. This was highly reliſhed by all the world, for Seneca was in great reputation at Rome; and every body was in hopes that the young prince (being formed by ſo ſkilful a maſter) could have no other ſentiments than thoſe of honour and moderation.

Agrippina's advancement acquired her no leſs than abſolute power, and ſhe thought of nothing

* Tacit. Ann. 12.

but the means of preſerving it; the methods however, which ſhe took, were always either cruel or ſhameful. She kept all thoſe in a ſervile and dependent ſtate, that were not conſiderable on account of their credit or their employments. She perſecuted thoſe whom ſhe imagined ſhe had any reaſon to be afraid of, and that would not be prevailed upon to eſpouſe her intereſts. She ſecured (by granting the moſt criminal favours) ſuch, as by their power and authority at court, might be any hindrance to her vaſt projects; thoſe who had reſolution enough not to regard her threats, had very ſeldom virtue enough to reſiſt her charms *, ſo that between her power and her beauty, ſhe gained all her points.

This ſucceſs only ſerved to make her more haughty, and the emperor, after becoming her huſband, became her ſlave. She governed this weak prince ſo intirely, that ſhe diſpoſed of every thing according to her own will and pleaſure. If ſhe had favours to confer, ſhe neither minded birth nor merit, nor any thing but the attachment that people had to her perſon; from whence it proceeded, that the greateſt employments were beſtowed upon upſtarts, that were never known or heard of before, except for having been guilty of ſome notorious crime, which had procured them her eſteem. As for virtue, it remained in obſcurity, becauſe it was ſure to meet with no recompence. People were brought into the ſenate, that had neither honour, nobility, nor deſert, and at the ſame time, the deſcendents of thoſe patriots and ſenators, who had been the ornaments of Rome, were languiſhing in miſery and contempt; ſo that the moſt honourable governments and employments of the empire, were diſgraced by the meanneſs and baſeneſs of thoſe who

* Xiphilin. in Claud.

who were exalted to them; and thoſe glorious ornaments, which formerly were never granted but to the greateſt and worthieſt of men, were now proſtituted to the vileſt wretches, and ſuch as had been ſlaves.

To do ſervice to the republick, was no longer the way to advance people's fortune; nor was conquering provinces, gaining battles, or any ſuch like exploits, the road to preferment in theſe miſerable reigns; but it was by committing the blackeſt crimes, that men arrived to the dignity of prætor, cenſor, or conſul, which glorious and honourable poſts were not now to be obtained, but by treaſons, calumnies, murders, and perjury.

But the moſt deplorable circumſtance was, that the ſenate, being chiefly compoſed of low, ſervile people, approved (by ſhameful decrees) of all that the emperors, or rather their minions, were pleaſed to do. What they did in favour of Pallas, will be ſufficient to ſhew, to what a miſerable ſtate of ſervitude this venerable body was reduced, which formerly was ſo reſpected, and ſo jealous of their liberties, that they were not able to endure the leaſt encroachments of the firſt emperors, but who were now obliged to yield to every humour and caprice of a ſhameleſs woman, and the vileſt wretches in the empire.

Thus Rome, after having groaned under the tyrannical government of Meſſalina, fell under that of Agrippina *, who was not leſs cruel, nor leſs covetous, nor perhaps much leſs impudent. There was indeed this difference between them; that whereas the former diſhonoured her huſband and the empire, by proſtitutions, to which ſhe was hurried by an invincible inclination to libertiniſm; the other was not guilty but when her

* Xiphilin. in Ner.

intereſt made it neceſſary. Meſſalina boaſted of her debaucheries; Agrippina, on the contrary, diſguiſed hers, under the veil of a grave and demure countenance. In ſhort, Meſſalina was bad through conſtitution, the other through policy; for ſhe did not beſtow her favours but upon thoſe who could forward her ambitious views, and promote the advancement of her ſon, which was the favourite project that employed all her thoughts, and for the ſucceſs of which ſhe took infinite pains, though it was foretold her, that he would repay them with horrible ingratitude; for having one day conſulted the Chaldeans, as to the fate of her ſon, the ſoothſayers anſwered, that he would be emperor, but that he would put her to death. The unfortunate part of this prediction, certainly counterballanced, at leaſt, what was agreeable, and Agrippina had no reaſon to be overpleaſed with it; however *, the joy of having her ambition gratified, would not permit her to reflect upon the evil which threatened her, but turned her thoughts intirely upon that which indulged her vanity; and ſhe was ſo tranſported as to cry out, O let my ſon kill me, provided he reigns.

As ſoon as Agrippina imagined her authority and power was ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, ſhe turned all her thoughts to the ſatisfying of her vengeance †. Lollia Paulina was the firſt victim that was ſacrificed to it: and we have already ſeen, that the jealouſy of this empreſs was not appeaſed, but by the death of her rival. Calpurnia, a very illuſtrious lady, and of the higheſt quality, paid for the praiſes that Claudius one day gave her beauty, at the expence of her life; and all thoſe that Agrippina found amiable enough to p'eaſe

* Dio. Tacit. Ann. 14. Sueton. Claud. † Xiphil. in

pleaſe the emperor, became the objects of her hatred and perſecution.

Her covetouſneſs was alſo the occaſion of her committing great cruelties: ſhe ſuborned falſe witneſſes againſt thoſe whoſe riches ſhe could not obtain by other means; and, however innocent people were, they were ſoon thought criminal enough, if poſſeſſed of great wealth; nor was it poſſible for any body to ſave their life, but by quitting their eſtates to the greedineſs of Agrippina. Statillius Taurus * drew upon himſelf the implacable hatred of this empreſs, for refuſing to give up to her all his ſubſtance. He was ſon to that Taurus, who had the honour of being twice conſul, and who ſo remarkably diſplayed his magnificence in the noble amphitheatre, which he built at an immenſe charge, in Auguſtus's reign. He had gardens which were reckoned the fineſt in Rome, and which he kept in the niceſt order. Agrippina had long earneſtly coveted theſe gardens, but not having a lawful pretence to ſeize them, ſhe had recourſe to her ordinary means, viz. calumny and oppreſſion.

The court was full of thoſe venal mercenary wretches, that were capable of all manner of wickedneſs, when it became neceſſary to advance their fortunes, ſo that there was no need of Agrippina's giving herſelf much trouble to find a man for her purpoſe: Tarquinius Priſcus ſoon put her out of pain upon that ſcore. This villain was lieutenant to Taurus, when he was proconſul of Africa; and, tho' he had been a conſtant witneſs of Taurus's mildneſs and integrity in the exerciſe of his government, he did not ſcruple to accuſe him falſly, of corruption, and even of magick.

* Tacit. Ann. 12.

Taurus, who was perfectly innocent, was ſo aſtoniſhed to find that the very perſon was become his accuſer, who was beſt able to juſtify him if he had been attacked by another, that he was not able to bear ſuch an inſtance of perfidiouſneſs, and ingratitude: he choſe therefore to prevent, what he took for granted would be the judgment of the ſenate, and in a fit of deſpair, deprived himſelf of that life, which in all probability they would have ſpared; for they were ſo much perſuaded of his innocence, that, notwithſtanding all the credit and intereſt of the empreſs, Priſcus was turned out of his employment, and in a very ignominious manner expelled the ſenate. This was not the only puniſhment he underwent, for ſoon after, being himſelf convicted of rapine, extortion, and other crimes*, he was condemned to ſuffer the penalty of the law in caſes of that nature; and the remembrance of what he had acted againſt Taurus, made all the world rejoice at his execution.

Agrippina was extremely piqued and mortified at the misfortune that had befallen this man, who had not turned falſe accuſer but at her requeſt, and to do her pleaſure; but what happened to Vitellius, her chief favourite, was what ſhe was ſtill more ſenſible of. He was accuſed, by Junius Lupus, of having dared to carry his views ſo far as to look at the throne with a wiſhful eye, and to have entertained ſome hopes of ſeizing the empire. Claudius, who was timid, jealous, and ſuſpicious, liſtened very attentively to this accuſation: but the empreſs, who had her own reaſons for protecting Vitellius, very warmly eſpouſed his intereſts. She at firſt had recourſe to tears and intreaties, but proceeded at laſt to threats, to oblige the emperor to pardon

* Tacit. Ann. 14.

don him. She ſucceeded in her undertaking: Claudius believed every thing that ſhe had a mind he ſhould believe, and Vitellius was acquitted. Junius, his accuſer, was baniſhed; for Vitellius, out of his good nature and compaſſion, deſired that no other puniſhment ſhould be inflicted on him.

All theſe ſucceſſes encouraged Agrippina to carry her views ſtill further; and that her ſon Domitius might be as nearly related as poſſible to Claudius, ſhe formed a deſign to get him adopted by the emperor, though he had his ſon Britannicus, a young prince of great hopes. Pallas employed his credit to bring this about; and in order to gain his point, he had only to ſpeak the word. Domitius then became Cæſar's adopted ſon, and was called Nero. The people, who approved of this piece of injuſtice, applauded it extremely; and ſaid the emperor had done very well in aſſociating to himſelf a partner in the government, who might ſhare the fatigue with him. Praiſes in abundance were beſtowed upon Nero, and Agrippina was honoured with the title of Auguſt.

Claudius ſoon contrived that his favourite Pallas ſhould be rewarded for the pretty ſtep he had made him take; and this deſerves to be related, becauſe it ſhews to what a pitch the ſtupidity of the emperor, the inſolence of his freedmen, and the ſlavery of the ſenate was come to. A decree had been made againſt thoſe women, who proſtituted themſelves to ſlaves. Claudius gave out that this ſalutary law had been made at the inſtigation of Pallas. Borea Soranus, and all the other ſenators were of opinion, that Pallas (by way of recompence for the extraordinary ſervices he had done the republick) ſhould be intreated

treated to accept of the ornaments of prætor *, that he ſhould have the privilege of wearing the gold ring, which belonged to the knights, and that he ſhould be preſented with a ſum amounting to about ſeven hundred and fifty thouſand livres. This modeſt ſlave, as Pliny calls him †, accepted the honours, but refuſed the money. Claudius went to thank the ſenate for their liberality; and told them, that Pallas, with great gratitude, accepted the honour of the ring and the ornaments of prætor, but deſired to be excuſed as to the money, being reſolved to continue in his ancient poverty. This conſiſted in being poſſeſſed of only fifteen millions of livres.

Such a commendable moderation procured him new honours. Scipio was of opinion, that he ſhould publickly receive the thanks of the ſenate, for that being deſcended from the kings of Arcadia, he ſhould forget the grandeur of his extraction, and ſtoop ſo low, as to ſacrifice himſelf to the welfare of the publick, and condeſcend ſo far as to accept of employments under the emperor. Pallas, in order to tranſmit to poſterity this inſtance of his extraordinary modeſty, ordered that, in his epitaph, it ſhould be inſerted, that the ſenate, being inclined to make him a preſent of a conſiderable ſum of money, he was content with having deſerved it. It is difficult to ſay, which of theſe is moſt capable of raiſing the indignation of the reader, the provoking inſolence of this rapacious villain, or the ſhameful baſeneſs and ſlavery of the ſenate, reduced to the miſerable and hard neceſſity of proſtituting to a raſcal that deſerved to be hanged, ſuch honours and praiſes as would have been too glorious for the moſt virtuous and illuſtrious Romans. To this poor and deſpicable condition muſt

* Tacit. Ann. 12. † Plin. lib. 2. epiſt.

muſt all thoſe expect to bring themſelves, who ſacrifice their honour and duty, to their fortune and ambition.

That of Agrippina * was not yet ſatisfied, neither by the magnificent titles which were heaped upon her, the exalted ſtation to which ſhe was raiſed, nor the prodigious advancement of her ſon, who now, in a manner, touched the throne. On the contrary, all this only ſerved to augment her pride. She now reſolved to omit no opportunity of ſhewing to all the world, to what a pitch of grandeur ſhe was arrived. She went to the Capitol in a ſuperb triumphal chariot, which till then, had been a privilege belonging only to things ſacred. She never honoured the publick aſſemblies or temples with her preſence, but in a rich and moſt magnificent coach, paſſing through the ſtreets with a pompous and numerous equipage, loaded with jewels, and clad in a robe of cloth of gold, the ſumptuouſneſs and ſplendor of which wonderfully ſet off her beauty: never was there ſeen ſo proud and haughty a behaviour.

She was not content with diſplaying all this magnificence before the inhabitants of Rome, but alſo reſolved to give ſtrangers and foreign kings a high idea of her ſplendour and authority. She commanded that the capital town of the Ubians ſhould be called after her name, and ſent a colony thither. She ſhewed herſelf one day, ſeated upon an elevated throne, between the Roman ſtandards and the eagles, where ſhe received the homage † and ſubmiſſion of Cataractus, general of the troops of Great Britain, who came to return her thanks for his liberty, accompanied by his wife and brothers. And to make it appear that her intereſt and power did not conſiſt only in a glaring

* Xiphilin. in Ner. † Tacit. Ann. 12. c. 37.

a glaring outſide, but in a real and ſolid authority, ſhe oppoſed the emperor's favourites, in the affair of the Jews againſt the Samaritans. And, though Claudius had given a decree in favour of the latter, Agrippina, who eſpouſed king Agrippa's cauſe, (and who intereſted himſelf for the Jews) had it revoked, and obliged the emperor to iſſue one in favour of the Jews, on purpoſe to ſhew that her ſolicitation was not to be reſiſted.

The report of the abſolute power that Agrippina had acquired over the emperor, (which ſhe gave ſuch manifeſt tokens of) ſoon reached the moſt diſtant nations; and all countries ſtrove with each other, which ſhould pay her the moſt profound reſpect; ſo that not only the grandees of Rome, but thoſe of the whole world, endeavoured to give her all poſſible marks of their intire ſubmiſſion. The moſt curious and magnificent preſents were ſent her, from every corner of the earth; and among the reſt, a nightingale as white as ſnow, which coſt an immenſe ſum, and a blackbird *, that ſpoke as diſtinctly as a man‡; a rarity that had never been ſeen before. Claudius, who did not know all that Agriipina was capable of, gave encouragement to her enterprizes, by his indolence and blind condeſcenſion to her will and pleaſure, without reflecting, that he acted againſt his own intereſts; and ſhe depended ſo much on his ſtupidity, that there was nothing ſo difficult, in which ſhe did not hope to ſucceed. She procured her ſon the privilege of wearing the manly robe, long before the time allowed by the laws; as alſo that of demanding the conſulſhip in the twentieth year of his age: ſhe prevailed upon Claudius to give him leave to exerciſe the power of proconſul without the town. She

* Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. 10. cap. 29. ‡ Ibid. cap. 252.

She cauſed to be diſtributed (in the name of this young prince) a largeſſe or preſent of money to the ſoldiers and people, in order, by means of this generoſity, to diminiſh the affection which they had to Britannicus, and prejudice them in favour of Nero. In ſhort, ſhe cauſed him to be declared prince of the Roman youth. And, that the magnificence of his apparel might be of a piece with his pompous titles, and all the reſt of his grandeur, when the ceremonious games of the Circus were performed, Nero appeared moſt ſumptuouſly adorned with a triumphal robe, whilſt Britannicus, on the contrary, was only cloathed in his prætext [b], a diſtinction that was thought very unjuſt, and put a great many officers upon reflecting

[b] The prætext was a ſort of robe worn by the ſons of ſenators, until they were ſeventeen years of age, at which time they took the manly robe. The prætext was bordered with purple, and, together with it, they wore a ſort of golden box, in the ſhape of a heart, which was tyed about their neck, and hung upon their breaſt, in which were incloſed certain relicks, that they imagined were preſervatives againſt the effect of envy. Theſe youths were called prætextati, from the robe. The ſenate, however, conferred this honour and privilege on a boy called Papyrius, for having given (though very young) marks of a conſummate prudence, upon an occaſion that deſerves to be related. Youths of good families were permitted to hear the debates in the ſenate, that they might be early acquainted with the intereſts of the republick. This boy was preſent when affairs of great importance were on the carpet, and as ſoon as he returned home, his mother was very importunate with him to tell what paſſed in the ſenate. The boy refuſed to ſatisfy his mother's curioſity, and was not to be prevail'd upon to ſpeak a word, though preſſed extremely, until, at laſt, to get rid of her importunity, he was forced to invent a lye, and told her, that

reflecting upon the hard uſage which the emperor's ſon met with, which compaſſion of theirs was fatal to them; for all thoſe who ſhewed any tenderneſs for Britannicus, were diſmiſſed from their employments, and others, more devoted to Agrippina, put in their places. Geta, and Criſpinus, were the firſt who were puniſhed for giving ſome tokens of pity and affection for that poor prince. The empreſs took from them their commiſſions as captains of the guard, and thoſe two employs were united into one, and diſpoſed of in favour of Burrus *, who, indeed, was perfectly ſkilled in the art of war, but one who knew very well from whom he received it, and upon what conditions it was given him.

Thus Agrippina, with great cunning and art, greedily ſeized upon every opportunity of ſhewing her ſon to advantage, in order to make him agreeable to the legions and the people; but nothing

* Tacit. Ann. 12. cap. 42.

that the matter in queſtion, was whether it was more profitable to the ſtate that a woman ſhould have two huſbands, than that a man ſhould have two wives; and that the debate was adjourned until next morning. Papyrius's mother believing what the boy ſaid, aſſembled the principal ladies of Rome, and informing them of what was going on in the ſenate, they all went thither in a body the next day, and cryed out to the ſenators, to conſider very well how they decided an affair of ſuch importance, for that ſince a huſband was ſo much embarraſſed with one wife, it would be very imprudent to ſuffer him to have another. The ſenators, who underſtood nothing of all this, deſired the ladies to explain themſelves; and, after having unravelled this affair, the women's credulity was a ſubject of laughter among them, but they mightily commended the boy, and by a ſolemn decree, gave him the ſirname of Prætextatus.

thing could happen more luckily for him, than a great ſcarcity of proviſions, which afflicted Rome at that time. Agrippina, to make the evil appear greater than it was in reality ‖, raiſed, by her emiſſaries, a ſort of ſedition, to intimidate the emperor, who was then indiſpoſed, and not able to apply any remedy to this grievance. The people clamoured, aſked importunately for bread, and aſſembled in great multitudes, the noiſe of which ſoon reached Claudius's ears, who being frighted by this bawling of the mob, declared by a decree, which Agrippina dictated, that they ſhould addreſs themſelves to Nero, who was very capable of governing; and that his own indiſpoſition not permitting him to take the neceſſary care at this juncture, he had repoſed that truſt in Agrippina's ſon. Nero did not fail to make the moſt of the leſſons his mother gave him. He cauſed a great quantity of corn to be diſtributed to the people, which he had the ſecret of finding without much trouble; and, afterwards, went to the Capitol, accompanied by the ſenators, to make vows for the emperor's recovery, which was certainly the thing in the world he leaſt deſired. Narciſſus knew better than any body, that this was only a grimace of Agrippina's. He had thoroughly ſtudied the empreſs's temper, and conſequently was not ignorant of what all her ſchemes and deſigns tended to. He had, more than once, hinted them to the emperor; for, being his ſecretary, he had frequent opportunities of ſpeaking to him in private. For which reaſon, Agrippina mortally hated this favourite, whom ſhe continually found in her way, and always inflexible; but not daring to attack him openly, becauſe of the power he had over the

‖ Zonar. Tacit. Ann. 12.

the emperor, (which he ſufficently demonſtrated in the affair of Meſſalina) ſhe was very induſtrious in ſeeking out means of deſtroying him ſecretly; and, for that purpoſe, endeavoured as much as poſſible, to give the emperor a bad impreſſion of him, not directly, but with all the art and cunning ſhe was miſtreſs of. This made her eagerly embrace the opportunity of prejudicing Narciſſus, which offered itſelf in the ſham fight that was to be repreſented on the lake Fucinus, and for which Claudius had prepared and armed an hundred gallies. The borders of the lake, and all the neighbouring hills and mountains, were covered with an infinite number of people, that were come from Rome, and all the towns thereabouts, to be preſent at this magnificent ſhow. The emperor *, being clad in his coat of arms, was ſeated upon a ſplendid throne that was erected for him on an eminence, and Agrippina, moſt ſumptuouſly apparelled, upon another juſt by him. The battle was fought without any bad conſequences, but afterwards, the emperor would needs have another performed by people on foot; and in order to this, they had thrown bridges over the lake, and Claudius had ordered a grand entertainment to be prepared, to regale the whole court, in a place fitted up for that purpoſe, juſt at the mouth of the lake, and on the very ſpot through which the water was to run when let go; but the expected diverſions were changed into fear and dread; for the bank being cut to give the water of the lake a paſſage into a canal that was dug to receive it, the water ruſhed out with ſuch violence, that it bore down all before it, ſo that numbers of people were drowned; and ſuch a pannic ſeized the whole multitude, that thoſe who

* Dio. lib. 60. Tacit. Ann. 12. Sueton. in Claud.

who were neareſt to the water ſide, in order to ſave themſelves from the danger, crowded upon thoſe that were next them, and they again upon others, with ſuch terrible cries, added to the horrible noiſe of the water, that, even thoſe who were moſt diſtant, were terrified beyond expreſſion: never was there known ſo dreadful a diſaſter.

Claudius, who was naturally fearful, was more alarmed than other people, and Agrippina, ſeeing him in this ſituation, laid hold of the opportunity to irritate him againſt Narciſſus, upon whom ſhe threw all the blame, becauſe he was the perſon the emperor made choice of to conduct the whole affair. She told Claudius that nobody was in fault but he, whoſe ſordid avarice had prompted him to put into his own coffers, the money that was deſtined for this repreſentation; that, under an appearance of fidelity and extraordinary attachment to his prince, he was guilty of the moſt notorious rapine and extortion; that the provinces groaned under his oppreſſions, and that tho' his riches were prodigious, yet they were not able to ſatisfy his inſatiable covetouſneſs.

Narciſſus defended himſelf with a great deal of reſolution. He accuſed Agrippina of being inſupportably proud and ambitious. He plainly ſhewed the emperor, that if ſhe hated him, it was not becauſe he was rich, but becauſe he would not join with her in her wicked deſigns, being too faithful to his maſter. Narciſſus was certainly in the right, and was well perſuaded that the averſion Agrippina had to him, proceeded from that. He did not ſcruple to explain himſelf very freely upon that ſubject, whenever he was in company of his intimate friends; and uſed to tell them, that whether Britannicus or Nero

was

was emperor after Claudius, he was ſure neither one nor the other of them would ſuffer him to live long: Britannicus would put him to death, to revenge that of his mother; and Nero, becauſe he would ſacrifice him to Agrippina's reſentment; but that, whatever happened, he thought the obligations he had to the emperor, would never permit him to betray his intereſts; that it was from this motive, that he had brought about the death of Meſſalina, who diſhonoured her huſband by her proſtitutions, and for the ſame reaſon, he gave Claudius notice of Agrippina's bad intentions in other reſpects, beſides, that ſhe did not lead an over chaſte life. He added, that it would have been ſafer for the emperor to have let Meſſalina live, becauſe as ſhe was intirely taken up with her debaucheries, ſhe had never been guilty of forming any deſigns againſt her huſband's life; whereas, Agrippina had already extinguiſhed moſt of Cæſar's family, and aimed at nothing leſs than advancing her poſterity to the throne.

Claudius had formerly made ſome reflections of this kind, and had been informed that Agrippina did not conduct herſelf very prudently, for he had heard of ſome of her gallantries and ambitious projects. He even one day in his cups ventured to ſay, that he ſuffered the wickedneſs of his wives for a time, but that it would fall heavily upon them at laſt. Theſe words were told to Agrippina, who being apprehenſive of undergoing Meſſalina's fate, reſolved to be beforehand with Claudius, and get rid of him as ſoon as ſhe could. But before ſhe went upon this bold undertaking, ſhe was determined to ſacrifice Domitia Lepida *, Nero's aunt, to her vengeance, whom ſhe accuſed of practiſing magick, in

* Tacit. Ann. 12.

in order to compaſs the death of the emperor's wife, by her inchantments, and to have ſtirred up a revolt in Calabria to indulge her treaſonable deſigns againſt the ſtate.

Narciſſus openly undertook to juſtify Domitia againſt theſe imaginary crimes, but Agrippina's authority prevailed againſt his ſolicitations, and Domitia was condemned to death. The intereſt that the empreſs took in the deſtruction of this lady, was ſoon diſcovered, and it was found out that Domitia, who was rich, made Nero conſiderable preſents from time to time, which ſo won his affections, that he expreſſed great love to his aunt, and at the ſame time kept away from his mother, who treated him rudely. This exaſperated Agrippina againſt Domitia, being already jealous of her grandeur and her beauty.

The emperor, however, was afterwards informed, that Domitia had been condemned unjuſtly, and had periſhed through the artifice of Agrippina. He examined the behaviour of his wife, and reflected upon all that Narciſſus had told him, which gave him ſo much uneaſineſs, that he imagined his health was much impaired by it, and went to Sinueſſa to make uſe of the baths of that place; but he met with his death where he hoped to find his recovery, for Agrippina made uſe of that opportunity to poiſon him *, becauſe ſhe had not ſo many eyes upon her in that place, as ſhe would have had at Rome. For this purpoſe, ſhe made uſe of the famous Locuſta †, and gave her orders to prepare a very active poiſon. This was put into ‡ a ragout of muſhrooms, which he was very fond of; but becauſe it operated but ſlowly, and the emperor was ſeized with a vomit-

* Tacit. Ann. 12. † Sueton. in Claud. ‡ Dio. Xiphilin. in Claud.

a vomiting, they were afraid it would have no effect, ſo Xenophon, a phyſician ‖, who had no ſcruples, and was intirely devoted to Agrippina's will, pretending to aſſiſt the emperor, and facilitate his vomiting, put a feather down his throat, that was dipped in ſo ſubtle a poiſon, that he expired a few moments after.

Agrippina kept his death very ſecret, until ſhe had diſpoſed every thing in favour of her ſon. She aſſembled the ſenate and the conſuls, and ordered them to make vows for the emperor's recovery; ſhe heaped cloaths upon him, as if it were to keep him warm; and carrying her artifice further ſtill, ſhe ſent for the comedians to divert him, and pretended it was by the directions of the emperor; and that nobody might inform Britannicus and Octavia of the death of their father, ſhe kept them ſhut up in a room, where ſhe pretended to make much of them, and loaded them with the feigned careſſes of a tender mother.

However, the report of Claudius's death was ſoon ſpread about the town, and Nero, accompanied by Burrus, ſhewed himſelf to the ſoldiers, to whom he promiſed great rewards, and they hearing nothing of Britannicus, proclaimed Agrippina's ſon emperor. This haſty election was preſently confirmed by a decree of the ſenate, and who iſſued another ſoon after, by which Claudius was placed in the number of the gods. Nero, who knew that Claudius had been poiſoned with muſhrooms, ever after called them food for gods *.

Agrippina, ſeeing her wiſhes accompliſhed, thought of nothing but how to gratify her revenge: ſhe fell furiouſly upon all thoſe who had thwarted

‖ Aurel. Victor. excerp. * Sueton. in Ner. 33.

thwarted her deſigns, and from whom ſhe apprehended ſhe had any thing to fear. Junius Silanus * was the firſt victim ſhe offered up to her hatred. This prince, whom Caligula called the golden ſheep, becauſe of the ſweetneſs of his temper, was great grandſon to Auguſtus, and had been made proconſul of Aſia. Agrippina dreaded him, on account of his high birth, and the great love the people had to him, who openly declared that he ought to be emperor, that he deſerved it, and was more capable of it than Nero, a young man without experience, who obtained the reins of government by means of innumerable crimes, that his mother had committed. Another reaſon induced Agrippina to deſtroy Silanus, which was the fear ſhe was in leſt he ſhould revenge the death of his brother L. Silanus, whom ſhe had put to death. Theſe were his crimes, for which Agrippina had him poiſoned, and was conſequently delivered from her apprehenſions.

Narciſſus was the ſecond perſon condemned. Agrippina hated him mortally, becauſe ſhe had always found in him a fidelity, that neither her threats nor her promiſes had ever been able to corrupt: a very ſcarce virtue, in an age when perfidiouſneſs and treaſon never went unrewarded; ſo the moment Claudius was dead, Narciſſus was arreſted and committed cloſe priſoner, where he languiſhed in ſuch extreme miſery, that he was forced to put an end to his own life, though Nero had deſired that he ſhould be ſpared. A memorable example of the viciſſitudes of fortune, who does not ſmile upon us for a time, but in order to humble and mortify us more cruelly afterwards: or rather a terrible leſſon for thoſe horſe-leeches, who devour the people by their extortions,

* Tacit. Ann. 13. c 1.

tortions, and who are permitted by divine providence to fall into their original poverty. It is certain, that Narciſſus did not deſerve a more happy end; and it was but juſt * that he ſhould die in poverty and miſery, who had acquired immenſe riches by robbing the whole world, and who, by one continued ſeries of rapine and extortion, had heaped up more riches than Crœſus, and the kings of Perſia †.

Agrippina had promiſed to her reſentment a great many more ſacrifices, but Burrus and Seneca did not always approve of theſe violent meaſures, ſo they oppoſed them as much as was in their power. They were Nero's governors, and had an equal authority; and though they were of different characters (Burrus being ſevere and Seneca very mild) yet they were good friends, and acted in concert to infuſe good notions into his mind, and put ſome ſtop to the empreſs's ambitious career. Pallas was Agrippina's prime miniſter, who influenced her in all ſorts of affairs; and he who had ſo much abuſed the abſolute power that he had aſſumed in Claudius's reign, aſpired to the ſame degree of authority under Nero; but this prince was not of a temper to be treated in ſuch a manner, by one that had been a ſlave, and who was inſupportable to him by the arrogance and ſeverity he affected; beſides, Burrus and Seneca could not bear that any body ſhould pretend to govern the emperor but themſelves. They looked upon the leſſons that other people preſumed to give him, as an attack upon their privilege, for which reaſon they omitted nothing that could give Nero a bad opinion of him, and alſo reſolved to humble the empreſs, and to mortify

* Dio. lib. 60. Sueton. in Claud. † Juvenal Sat. 14.

tify her upon every occaſion as much as poſſible; who, in the name of her ſon, governed the empire intirely.

The firſt opportunity they had of doing it, was the audience which Nero gave to the Armenian ambaſſadors, who were come to Rome, to ſolicit ſome affairs of their country. The day being come when this ceremony was to be performed *, Nero was ſeated on his throne for that purpoſe; and Agrippina, who looked upon her ſon's elevation as a work of her contrivance, expected precedence every where as formerly, and intended to ſit upon the ſame throne with the emperor. It would certainly have been a ſtrange and unheard-of thing, if a woman had preſided upon ſo remarkable and ſolemn an occaſion; and the ambaſſadors, who had the higheſt idea of the majeſty and grandeur of the Roman empire, could not have been witneſſes of the deſpicable ſtate of ſlavery to which the people were reduced, without abating very much of the reſpect they had for the Romans, and forming notions very different from what they had conceived. Nero himſelf, whatever deference he had at that time for his mother, did not approve of this novelty. In the mean time, Agrippina advanced, and nobody ſaid a word: but Seneca †, ſeeing the ſcandal that the empreſs's pride was going to bring upon the Roman empire, adviſed Nero to come down from the throne, as if it were to receive his mother and do her honour: Nero did ſo, and making her a great many compliments and civilities, found ſome pretence to put off the audience to another day.

Burrus and Seneca, after this attempt of Agrippina's, had no room to doubt whether ſhe intended

* Xiphilin. in Ner.

† Tacit. Ann. 13.

ed to govern the empire or not; they therefore united themſelves more cloſely together againſt her, and determined to take ſuch meaſures, as ſhould put a ſtop to her career; but they did not judge the matter right, for they tolerated an amour that Nero was carrying on * with Actea, who had been a ſlave, in order to ſet this girl in oppoſition to the haughty proceedings of the empreſs; and by this wrong piece of complaiſance, they cauſed great inconveniencies, for Nero was ſo captivated with her charms, that nothing would ſerve him but marrying her, and by that means trampled over all manner of order and decency.

Agrippina were very ſenſible that her credit and intereſt were very much weakened by the favour this girl was in; and not being able to bear that her power ſhould be diminiſhed by a miſerable concubine, broke out into the utmoſt fury and rage againſt her ſon, which had not the effects ſhe propoſed; for, inſtead of leſſening his affection for Actea, it inflamed him the more; and becauſe Agrippina became every day more jealous in proportion to her ſon's attachment to Actea, ſhe carried her reſentment ſo far, as to make uſe of the moſt abuſive language to the emperor, which exaſperated him to that degree, that he quite loſt all reſpect for her; and, that he might render her odious to the people †, he pretended to have a mind to quit the empire, and retire to Rhodes, where he ſaid he might be quiet. This quarrel between Nero and Agrippina ‡, furniſhed matter of laughter and mirth to all Rome; for in their wrath, they reproached each other with certain truths, that ought not to have been mentioned, but with which the publick was preſently acquainted.

Nero,

*Dio. lib. 61. † Sueton. in Ner. ‡ Tacit. Ann. Dio. lib. 61.

Nero, however, conſidered, that for many reaſons it was incumbent on him to be upon tolerable terms with his mother; he pretended to have nothing more to ſay to Actea, and when he deſigned to make her any preſents, he deſired his favourite Serenus to give them as from himſelf. Agrippina, who was continually upon the watch, as to her ſon's conduct, was ſo far deceived, that ſhe took this change of his behaviour to be owing to his repentance, or the effect of a diſlike he had taken to his miſtreſs; and, that ſhe might cure him intirely of his paſſion for her, did not ſpare either careſſes, or the moſt ſhameful complaiſance. She went further ſtill, for laying aſide her uſual pride and haughtineſs, ſhe condemned her paſt conduct, and to ſhew her ſon that ſhe was determined to live with him for the future upon a good footing, ſhe offered to ſerve him herſelf in his pleaſures and intrigues. But the emperor, who could not truſt to her fair promiſes, was always upon his guard againſt them, and knew that ſome deep deſign lay at the bottom; ſo that, tho' he ſtrove all he could to diſguiſe his real ſentiments, it was not poſſible for him to wear a maſk continually, but now and then the truth would break out; and Agrippina, who had a great deal of penetration, ſoon perceived it, and could not forbear complaining. This revived their firſt diſagreement, and the breach became wider than ever.

Agrippina was the firſt who made it break out; for Nero, having ſent her one day the moſt precious and coſtly furniture of the palace, as well as the magnificent robes and jewels that had belonged to the preceding empreſſes; ſhe looked upon it as a high affront, and ſaid with an air of haughtineſs and contempt, that ſhe did not accept of theſe things as a gift, but as a ſmall part

of what he had received from her; for that in reality he was beholden to her for every thing he poſſeſſed *. Theſe words were ſoon brought to Nero, and even repreſented worſe than they really were. He was offended in the higheſt degree, and by way of being revenged, without directly attacking his mother, he diſmiſſed Pallas from his employment of lord treaſurer.

The diſgrace of this favourite of Agrippina's (with whom ſhe had a moſt intimate and ſhameful commerce) wrought her up to the greateſt pitch of rage and fury, ſo that ſhe no longer kept any meaſures. Nothing was to be heard but bitter complaints, which ſhe thundered out continually in the palace, and threatened Nero to cauſe Britannicus to be brought into the camp, and ſhewn to the legions as lawful heir to Claudius, and then to be declared emperor. She proteſted ſhe would diſcover to the whole world the wicked means that were made uſe of to place upon the throne her huſband's adopted ſon, to the prejudice of him whoſe right it was. That ſhe was well aſſured the troops would rather regard Germanicus's daughter, than Burrus, that man of yeſterday, or Seneca, that infamous and venal perſon, who had been baniſhed, and who intended to uſurp the government between them. After theſe threats, ſhe vomited out againſt Nero all the injurious and provoking language ſhe could think of; ſhe took it into her head to invoke the divine Claudius, and the ghoſt of Silanus; and, ſuffering herſelf to be tranſported with fury beyond all bounds, ſhe laid hold upon the emperor, and was within the leaſt in the world of ſtriking him.

Nero was never in ſo much perplexity before. He was frighted at the terrible threatnings of his mother,

* Tacit. Ann. 13.

mother, whoſe temper he was too well acquainted with, to doubt whether ſhe was capable of being as good as her word; he reflected upon all that ſhe had ſaid of Britannicus, who was already old enough to be very formidable, and to be well enough acquainted with his right to the empire which he had been robbed of. In effect, that young prince had given people to underſtand, that he was by no means ignorant of his pretenſions *; for as he and his companions were one day diverting themſelves at a play where a king was to be made, who was to command the reſt, and the lot having fallen upon Nero, he commanded Britannicus to ſing a ſong, with a deſign of turning him into ridicule. Britannicus obeyed immediately and ſung one very à propos, in which he ſaid, that by treaſonable practices, they had deprived him of his father's throne. This ſong, which ſeemed as if it had been calculated on purpoſe, moved all the company, and particularly diſconcerted Nero ſo much, that not doubting but Britannicus would ſoon carry theſe conſiderations much further, he reſolved to diſpatch this dangerous rival out of the way.

Nero had another reaſon (ſuch as it was) for being jealous of Britannicus †, and that, as weak and unjuſt, as it was ridiculous. This latter happened unfortunately to have a very good voice; and Nero, who would needs paſs for the beſt ſinger in the world, could not bear to be outdone by Britannicus; ſo this poor young prince, being become odious to the emperor, by his merit and nearneſs to the throne, was poiſoned.

Agrippina (to do her juſtice) was never ſuſpected of having any hand in this horrid crime. The aſtoniſhment ſhe was ſtruck with, and the terror

* Tacit. Ann. 13. c. 15. † Sueton. in Ner.

that ſeized her when Britannicus dropped down dead ſuddenly, ſufficiently juſtified her in that reſpect; and, to ſay the truth, ſhe had but too much reaſon for her apprehenſions; for, in loſing Britannicus, ſhe loſt her beſt ſupport, and the only perſon by whoſe means ſhe hoped to maintain her authority, which was already in a very declining way.

Being deſtitute of this reſource, ſhe thought proper to careſs ſuch people as ſhe hoped had any friendſhip for her, and to hold private cabals with them. She ſhewed great civility to the captains, centurions, and all ſuch as had any weight or authority, as if ſhe had been reſolved to make herſelf the head of a party, and become formidable to Nero: but he, who kept no longer any meaſures with her, ſoon penetrated her deſigns; and, in order to render them abortive, took from her the uſual guard that had always attended her, as mother and wife of the emperor. He cauſed her to be lodged in Antonia's houſe, where he viſited her but very ſeldom, and always well accompanied. He carried his ſeverity further ſtill, for he obliged her to quit Rome*, and gave her, without the town, a very indifferent houſe, whither he ſent people on purpoſe to inſult her brutally, and who affronted her in every ſhape they could think.

From this moment the ſcene was quite changed with Agrippina †; all her grandeur vaniſh'd; her credit and authority fell to nothing. This idol, that had been worſhiped by all the world, received no more homage or incenſe; there did not remain the leaſt footſteps of her dignity and magnificence, nor the leaſt ſhadow of that exorbitant power, which ſhe had exerciſed with ſo much pride and haughtineſs; and this empreſs, before

* Sueton in Ner. 24. † Dio. lib. 60.

before whom every knee had formerly bent, was all on a ſudden ſo thoroughly abandoned, that of the innumerable crowd of adorers ‡, who a little before worſhiped at her ſhrine, nobody came near her but a few women, who viſited her much leſs through friendſhip, that a deſire to hear her complaints, to obſerve maliciouſly the minuteſt of her actions, and to keep a ſort of regiſter of every word that eſcaped her, in order to report them afterwards to Nero. Thus it frequently happens, that people's affections alter as fortune changes, and examples are very numerous of thoſe turning moſt againſt us, who in our proſperity ſeemed our greateſt friends. Agrippina ſadly experienced the truth of this, for Silana, who had been her moſt intimate friend, was the moſt forward to perſecute her, in cauſing her to be accuſed by Paris of having a deſign to ſeize the empire. It is true, that Silana had reaſons not to be over-fond of Agrippina, but ſhe did not ſucceed in her revenge as happily as ſhe expected.

Silana was a lady of an illuſtrious family, and very handſome, but her beauty was of that ſort in which might be perceived a good deal of ſtudy and affectation; and beſides this, ſhe was very rich. There was a great intimacy between Agrippina and her, which the former cultivated as much as poſſible, becauſe Silana having no children, the empreſs was in hopes of coming in for a good ſhare of her large poſſeſſions. All Agrippina's pretended love and kindneſs was founded upon theſe intereſted views; for it plainly appeared, notwithſtanding her diſſimulation, that ſhe loved the lady's eſtate more than her perſon; for Sextus Africanus, a Roman knight, being reſolved to marry this lady, Agrippina, who ſaw

‡ Tacit. Ann. 13.

that all her hopes would be deſtroyed, and her greedineſs diſappointed by this marriage, omitted nothing to hinder it; ſometimes by giving Africanus a very bad character of the lady, and raiſing ſuſpicions in him with regard to her reputation. Sometimes ſhe would inſinuate, that it would be ridiculous for a young man like him, to marry a woman ſo much older than himſelf, whoſe beauty was much upon the decline. In ſhort, ſhe made uſe of ſo many methods to give him a bad opinion of his miſtreſs, that he had no longer any affection for her.

The lady preſently diſcovered that this change in her lover was owing to Agrippina's good offices, which ſhe reſented ſo much, that ſhe eagerly ſeized the opportunity of her diſgrace to be revenged; and in order to compaſs her deſign with the leſs danger, ſhe employed two of her confidants, to perſuade Paris the comedian to be her accuſer. Paris could not chuſe but acquit himſelf well, in acting a part ſo conformable to his profeſſion. He goes to Nero one night when he was in his debauches, and appearing before him with a melancholy countenance, which ſeemed to denote the greatneſs of the danger he came to inform him of, told him, ſighing, that he had diſcovered the moſt deep-laid conſpiracy that was formed againſt him, and that the author of it was no other than his own mother, who not being able to endure that any perſon ſhould reign but herſelf, had entered into ſtrict engagements with Rubellius Plautus, whom ſhe was to marry and make emperor; and by this marriage the government of the empire was to be veſted in her. That what chiefly induced her to pitch upon Plautus for the carrying on of this ambitious project, was his high birth, being great-grandſon to Auguſtus, and ſhe did not doubt but that conſideration

ſideration would gain him a prodigious number of friends. This news terrified Nero to ſuch a degree, that he had a great mind to put both his mother and Plautus to death that moment; but Burrus, whoſe advice was always liſtened to, moderated this violence of his temper, by repreſenting to him, that, let a criminal be never ſo guilty, he ought always to be heard, and eſpecially a mother; that Agrippina had but one accuſer, who laid a crime to her charge that was hardly credible; that this ſtory coming from ſuch a perſon as a comedian, was not to be taken for granted; and in ſhort, that ſo raſh and haſty a reſolution, formed in the night, and in the midſt of a debauch, could not but be much blamed by all the world. He added, that he did not take upon him to vindicate Agrippina, but on the contrary, if upon a ſtrict examination it ſhould prove true, he would not ſcruple, himſelf, to be both her judge and executioner.

Nero yielded to theſe reaſons, and ſent Burrus the next morning to his mother, accompanied by Seneca and ſome others, to be witneſſes of what ſhe would ſay in her defence. Burrus interrogated the empreſs as to the crime ſhe was accuſed of *, and affected a certain threatning air, that would have much diſconcerted any body but herſelf. But Agrippina did not, upon this occaſion, forget either her courage or her pride. She anſwered him, with a diſdainful ſort of contempt, that ſhe was not at all ſurpriſed that Silana, who never had a child, ſhould be ignorant of the maternal tenderneſs a mother has for her offspring; but that ſhe would have her know, it was not ſo eaſy for a mother to deſtroy her ſon, as it was for a courtezan to change her lovers. That her enemies, by ſuborning the infamous Atimetus and

* Tacit. Ann. 13.

a vile comedian againſt her, had a mind, ſhe ſuppoſed, to entertain people with a farce; that an accuſation formed by ſuch wretches, ought to be of no weight; and that ſhe defy'd her bittereſt enemy to produce one witneſs, worthy of credit, to prove that ſhe had ever ſolicited the cohorts of the town, or endeavoured to corrupt the provinces, or tampered with the ſlaves or freedmen to revolt againſt her ſon. She then made it appear, that the crime ſhe was accuſed of was abſolutely inconſiſtent with her own intereſt, becauſe that, if Britannicus was emperor, ſhe might flatter herſelf with the hopes of living out of danger, which ſhe could never do if Plautus, or any other, had the ſovereign command; becauſe ſhe ſhould never, in that caſe, want enemies to accuſe her of ſuch crimes as would admit of no pardon except from a ſon to a mother.

The empreſs's manner of juſtifying herſelf was very moving to thoſe that were preſent. They ſtrove all they could to appeaſe her; but ſhe inſiſted upon ſpeaking to her ſon, and accordingly was brought before him, but diſdained to ſay a word in her defence, as thinking it inconſiſtent with her dignity to clear up or contradict all the falſhoods and calumnies that had been alledged againſt her. She alſo affected to be quite ſilent as to the favours ſhe had heaped upon him, that ſhe might not ſeem to reproach him with them, but peremptorily demanded that he ſhould puniſh her adverſaries for their malice, and enable her to reward her friends. She obtained both. Silana was baniſhed, Atimetus, one of her accuſers, was put to death, and the employments of chief commiſſary of provinces, the government of Egypt, and other important poſts, were diſpoſed of in favour of the empreſs's friends. Thus it often

often happens, that the ſtorms we raiſe to ſhipwreck other people, occaſion our own ruin.

Agrippina having thus dextrouſly made the artifice, that her enemies made uſe of to ruin her, inſtrumental to the re-eſtabliſhment of her authority, left nothing undone that could confirm it; but the laws of modeſty will not permit us to be particular as to the means ſhe employed for that purpoſe. As ſhe perceived her credit was diminiſhed by that of Sabina Poppea, with whom Nero at that time began to be enamoured, ſhe collected all her charms in order to oppoſe them to thoſe of Poppea; for ſhe knew that her ſon was very ſuſceptible of love, and that he ſtuck at nothing, when the queſtion was to gratify his inclinations. She therefore formed the deteſtable reſolution of exerting her utmoſt endeavours to create in her ſon ſuch ſentiments as are ſhocking to nature, by making him all the ſeducing and ſhameful advances in her power, hoping that by means of theſe infamous careſſes, ſhe might be able to eraſe out of the emperor's mind thoſe beginnings of eſteem that he had conceived for Poppea. Sometimes ſhe would go to him when he was elated with wine *, and took care to make her appearance in ſuch a dreſs as was moſt capable of exciting deſire. At other times ſhe affected to diſplay her beauty before him, with the ſame aſſurance and impudence that a courtezan practiſes before a gallant. When ſhe went with him in his litter †, ſhe careſſed him in the moſt ſhameful manner, to tempt him to commit abomination with her; nor was there wanting evident demonſtration, that theſe inceſtuous flames of Agrippina had met with a ſuitable return in Nero.

She

* Tacit. Ann. 14. c. 2. † Sueton. in Ner. 28. Aurel. Vict. Excerpt. in Domit. Neron.

She did not however by this crime, reap all the ſatisfaction ſhe hoped for, becauſe Nero was ſoon diſguſted with it, and gave himſelf up intirely to his paſſion for Poppea, which tormented the empreſs with the moſt cruel jealouſy. Poppea, on her ſide, was not idle, but taking advantage of the favourable ſituation the emperor was in with regard to her, never ceaſed * to irritate him againſt his mother, by telling him that ſhe could not endure that any body ſhould govern but herſelf; that any power ſuperior to her own, gave her offence, and conſequently, that he ought to be always ſuſpicious of ſuch an unbounded ambition; for that the empreſs would omit nothing to get rid of thoſe who preſumed to put themſelves in competition with her. Nero, who of himſelf was ſufficiently inclined to believe every thing that was bad of his mother, gave credit to all this, and reſolved to put her to death, who had given him life, and the empire; and to deliver himſelf at once from an object whom he no longer looked upon but as the declared enemy to his pleaſures, and the only obſtacle to his happineſs.

He had deſigned this long ago, and nothing troubled him but how to remove from himſelf the ſuſpicion of it. For which reaſon he would not have recourſe to any violent means, becauſe that would have made too much noiſe. He tried ſeveral times to poiſon her †, and eſpecially at an entertainment ‡, which by agreement between him and Otho, the latter gave to the emperor and his mother; where there was no want of magnificence, gallantry, and good cheer, to take away from Agrippina all miſtruſt, by theſe falſe tokens of friendſhip and reſpect. But theſe attempts

* Xiph. in Ner. Dio. lib. 61. † Tacit. Ann. 14.
‡ Sueton in Othon.

tempts were always in vain, becauſe the empreſs was always upon her guard againſt any ambuſhes of that ſort, that her ſon might lay for her, and had provided the moſt powerful antidotes, which ſhe never failed to make uſe of as often as ſhe thought there was occaſion; this determined the emperor to diſpatch her at any rate.

It is reported that Seneca did not endeavour to diſſuade * him from this horrible deſign, though this is what is ſcarce credible. It is even affirmed that the philoſopher, perceiving that his leſſons produced no fruit, but that the deviliſh inclinations of Nero were infinitely more prevalent than all his maxims, encouraged him to commit this parricide, which he was already guilty of in his heart, that ſo execrable a crime might draw down upon him the hatred of the gods and men. Be it as it will, Nero having fortified his mind againſt all that could happen, thought of nothing but how to bring it about. At firſt † he had recourſe to a plank ſo contrived, as that it was to fall upon her in the night, and cruſh her to pieces; but this deſign having been diſcovered, Anicet, one of his freedmen, and who had been his governor when he was a child, (a perſon fertile in expedients of this nature) offered to find out a method of putting her to death, without any body's being ſuſpected of it. He was then commander of the gallies in the port of Miſſena, and hated Agrippina as much as ſhe did him. Nero did not believe he could poſſibly find out a fitter man for his purpoſe, than this infamous officer, who was capable of any wicked action. In effect, he undertook to have a gally made in ſuch a manner, as that the bottom ſhould open, and,

* Xiphilin. in Ner. † Sueton. in Ner. Tacit. Ann. 14. Dio. lib. 62.

and, at the ſame moment, the upper part ſhould fall of itſelf; ſo that Agrippina could not fail of being either cruſhed to death or drowned, without giving the leaſt room for ſuſpicion, for that it would paſs for one of thoſe unfortunate accidents that happen frequently at ſea. The emperor was to carry on the farce, by erecting temples to his mother's memory, which were to be looked upon as undeniable demonſtrations of his grief, reſpect, and affection, and would infallibly remove all grounds of ſuſpicion.

Nero approved of this ſcheme; and the better to put it in execution, it was reſolved that it ſhould be done at Baia [d], in the Campania of Rome, when the feaſt of Minerva was to be celebrated. This ceremony ſerved Nero for a pretence to leave Rome, and he engaged his mother to be of the party. He was already reconciled to her in appearance, and made as if he was very ſorry he had ever failed in point of reſpect to her. He blamed his paſt conduct, and proteſted that for the future ſhe ſhould never have the leaſt reaſon

[d] Baia was a very agreeable town in the Campania of Rome. There were hot baths, to which people reſorted as much for pleaſure as health. The country about it was extremely fertile, and the neighbourhood of the town abounded with magnificent palaces, and delicious gardens, ſo that the Romans uſed to flock thither in great numbers. Horace in one of his verſes ſets forth its praiſes,

Nullus in orbe locus Baiis prælucet Amœnis.

Martial ſays alſo, that Baia ſurpaſſes all that he is able to deſcribe,

Laudabo dignè, non ſatis tamen Baïas.

This town was deſtroyed by earthquakes.

reaſon to complain of him, for he ſaid it was but reaſonable that children ſhould bear with the humours of their parents, to whom they owed their life and being. Thus this unnatural and cruel prince, diſguiſed the moſt horrible perfidiouſneſs that could enter into the heart of man, under the ſpecious ſhew of filial tenderneſs and affection. He was perſuaded that his mother would the more eaſily fall into this ſnare, as women are always apt to believe what they ardently deſire. The plot being thus laid, and all the meaſures taker, Nero left Rome, together with his mother, in a gally, which they had taken care to adorn magnificently. They arrived at Antium, where the emperor left Agrippina, and proceeded to Baia. After having paſſed a few days there, he wrote his mother a letter full of kindneſs and reſpect, and intreated her to come and paſs ſome time with him. She parted from Antium and landed at Baules, a pleaſant country-houſe between Miſſena and Baia, by the ſea-ſide. Nero was there ready to receive her, conducted her to the caſtle that ſhe might repoſe herſelf, and then he returned to Baia.

Notwithſtanding all the precautions that were taken to keep this matter ſecret, Agrippina was informed of it; ſome body had let her know what was carrying on againſt her, and ſhe was at a loſs what to believe. In this ſtate of uncertainty ſhe would not venture herſelf at ſea again, but was carried to Baia in a chair. She was there received by her ſon with all poſſible demonſtrations of tenderneſs and affection, and treated in the moſt ſumptuous manner. The emperor, to remove all grounds of ſuſpicion, even conſulted her in ſome ſerious affairs; granted her ſeveral favours without her aſking them, invented all ſorts of diverſions for her, and made her always

ſit

ſit above him, which mark of reſpect pleaſed her infinitely.

This extraordinary fit of good humour in the emperor deceived Agrippina. She took for true affection and duty, this cunning outſide appearance; for never was artifice better carried on. When Agrippina was to return to Baules, Nero embraced her in the kindeſt and moſt affectionate manner imaginable, whether in order to conceal his deſign the better, or becauſe nature was working her laſt efforts upon the heart of this barbarian; he waited on her to the ſea-ſide, and the gally in which ſhe had come being damaged as by accident (though by Nero's ſecret orders) he deſired her to embark on board of that which Anicet had prepared; commanding that officer to eſcort, or rather to deſtroy her.

The weather was as fine and the ſea as calm as poſſible *, as if providence had ſo ordered it, that Nero might have no excuſe for his crime, nor attribute his mother's misfortune to the darkneſs of the night or a tempeſtuous ſea. Agrippina had none of her retinue with her but Creperius Gallus, who ſtood under the helm, and a lady named Aceronia Polla, who ſat at the empreſs's feet, and was congratulating her on the happy reconciliation between her and the emperor. The gally had proceeded but a little way, when at a ſignal given by Anicet, the floor of the cabbin where Agrippina was, being loaded with lead, gave way. Creperius was cruſhed to pieces with it †, and conſequently died upon the ſpot; but the place where Agrippina kept, held ſome time longer, becauſe that part of the floor was too ſtrong to yield immediately under the weight.

* Tacit. Ann. 14. † Dio. lib. 62. Sueton. in Ner.

weight. The confuſion that this occaſioned was ſo great, that the ſailors who were in the plot, were vexed beyond meaſure at the diſappointment, and did not know what they were about. The ſprings which were to occaſion the opening of the veſſel at the inſtant when the floor was to fall, did not perform their office, becauſe the ſailors who were not in the ſecret, hindered the others in ſuch a manner, as that in order to ſink the gally, they were forced to overſet her; but this was not to be done without great difficulty, becauſe thoſe who were innocent undid all that the others performed, by a contrary way of working.

During this terrible fright and hurry, Agrippina and Aceronia fell into the ſea. Aceronia, who ſuſpected no treaſon, called out for help; and that it might come as ſpeedily as poſſible, never ceaſed bawling that they ſhould ſave the empreſs mother. This zeal for Agrippina was the cauſe of Aceronia's death, for as it was their intention to murder the empreſs, they daſhed Aceronia's brains out with their oars, taking her for Agrippina.

The empreſs, on the contrary, ſaid not a word, but had the good fortune to keep herſelf above water till ſhe was aſſiſted by ſome boats that were at a little diſtance, and received no other damage than a ſtroke on the ſhoulder. She was immediately carried to a neighbouring houſe, not far from where Nero was, and as ſoon as ſhe had a little recovered of her fright and fatigue, Aceronia's being knocked on the head, the pains the ſailors took to wreck the gally, and many other circumſtances crowded into her mind, and overwhelmed her with melancholy reflections.

She had too much penetration not to ſee into this myſtery, and ſoon recollected that the affair did

did not look like chance or accident; but on the other hand, ſhe was too politick not to pretend that ſhe had no manner of ſuſpicion. She immediately ſent off her freedman Agerinus, to inform Nero of the riſk ſhe had run, and the eſcape ſhe had had, and to deſire him not to be at the trouble of coming to ſee her, for that in her preſent condition ſhe required nothing but reſt. Her avarice, however, did not forſake her in the midſt of her terrors and apprehenſions, for ſhe cauſed Aceronia's laſt will to be looked for, and ſealed up all her effects very carefully; in this ſhe did not in the leaſt diſſemble.

Nero had waited with the utmoſt impatience for the concluſion of this buſineſs, and was in the greateſt uneaſineſs and perplexity when he heard that his mother was ſaved, which he did not at all expect, for he thought the matter had been too well contrived to fail; and perceiving by what was reported to him, that ſhe could be in no ſort of doubt but that it was a deſigned thing, he was afraid that ſhe would certainly ſtir up againſt him the ſenate, the army, the people, and even the ſlaves. In this dilemma he ſent for Burrus and Seneca, to tell them his opinion, and to conſult them as to what was fit to be done.

They continued ſome time ſilent, but at laſt Seneca, who generally ſpoke firſt, looked at Burrus, as if it were to learn his ſentiments, whether it would not be right that ſoldiers ſhould be commanded to go and kill her. Burrus anſwered, that the prætorian guards had too much reſpect for Cæſar's family, and the memory of Germanicus, to do any ſuch thing; but that it was Anicet's buſineſs to finiſh what he had undertaken. Anicet did not require to be long intreated, but took the buſineſs upon himſelf very willingly; and Nero, in the tranſports of joy that he

he felt upon this occaſion (having found a man ready to oblige him in ſo ſenſible a manner) cried out, that at laſt he might ſay he was really emperor, and would always acknowledge himſelf beholden to Anicet for it.

Juſt then came in a meſſenger to tell Nero, that the empreſs had ſent Agerinus to him, who prayed to be admitted: he was brought in, and while he was ſpeaking, a poinard was ſlily conveyed between his feet, to make it believed that he had brought it under his robe, and dropped it by chance. The emperor ſent him immediately to priſon, as if he had come to aſſaſſinate him, and this was induſtriouſly reported abroad, that when the death of Agrippina ſhould be known, people might imagine ſhe killed herſelf, for vexation that ſhe had miſſed the opportunity of deſtroying her ſon.

Whilſt all this was paſſing at Baia, the noiſe of the accident that had happened to the empreſs was ſpread about the country, as a misfortune that happened merely by chance; and the people flocked * from all parts to the ſea-ſide, to give what aſſiſtance was in their power. Some threw themſelves into the firſt boats they could meet with, others waded into the water as far as they were able, and great numbers, holding up their hands towards heaven, made the air echo with their cries and ſupplications for the empreſs's ſafety. Multitudes came with flambeaux to enquire if ſhe was ſafe, and as ſoon as they knew that ſhe was ſo, and had retired, they all ran to ſee her, and to congratulate with her on her eſcape, returning thanks to the gods for having ſaved her from ſo terrible and ſurprizing an accident.

Agrippina,

* Tacit. Ann. 14.

Agrippina, however, could not help being in a cruel ſtate of uneaſineſs; the dread ſhe was in of the misfortunes that threatened her, put her in a miſerable condition. No kind meſſage from her ſon to cheer her heart, nor did Agerinus, whom ſhe had ſent, return to give her any comfort, ſo that ſhe had a ſecret foreknowledge that her fatal hour was approaching. At laſt Anicet came in, accompanied by ſoldiers, at the ſight of which all the company were terrified. The ſoldiers, by order of their chief, ſurrounded the houſe, and after having broke open the outward door, and ſeized upon all the domeſticks that he could find, he came at laſt to the chamber whither the empreſs had retired; the room had not much light in it, and the empreſs had nobody with her but one of her women, who hearing the noiſe that the ſoldiers made, was ſeized with a panick and fled, as moſt of the reſt had done; then the unfortunate Agrippina, ſeeing herſelf abandoned by all the world, ſaid to her woman as ſhe was going, What! doſt thou quit me too? Anicet was the firſt that came in, attended by two officers of the marines, and as ſoon as Agrippina perceived him, ſhe told him with a great deal of reſolution, that if he came to ſee her, ſhe begged he would go and tell Nero that ſhe was better; but if he had any deſign upon her life, ſhe could not believe that her ſon had any hand in it, or was capable of commanding a parricide like this. Theſe words did not in the leaſt move the ruffians; for while ſhe was ſpeaking they ſurrounded her bed, and one of the officers who came with Anicet, and was not leſs brutal than he, gave her a great ſtroke upon the head * with a ſtick, and a centurion immediately drew his ſword

* Dio. Tacit. Sueton.

ſword to kill her: then Agrippina, who could no longer doubt but her ſon was the author of her death, preſented herſelf to the murderers, and told them they ſhould begin by piercing that belly that had produced ſuch a monſter as Nero; and that inſtant ſhe was run through the body in ſeveral places.

Nero's unnatural barbarity was not yet ſatisfied; for after having murdered his mother, he added inſults that were rather more cruel than the former action; for when he was ſure ſhe was dead, he had the abominable curioſity to ſee her body quite naked, and brutally point out her faults and perfections; and then with a ſmiling and pleaſed countenance, turned about to thoſe about him, and told them, in a jocoſe manner, that he did not think he had ſo beautiful a mother. Some there are who deny this, but without much difficulty people may believe him capable of it, when they conſider his character in general, and eſpecially that he kept a concubine a great while, merely becauſe ſhe happened to reſemble his mother *.

This deteſtable emperor did not peaceably enjoy the fruits of this horrid murder; for though the ſovereign authority with which he was inveſted, and which he ſo much abuſed, ſcreened him againſt human juſtice, it could not protect him againſt the divine vengeance, from which nobody can hide themſelves. He was tormented with the intolerable pangs of conſcience †, which gave him no reſt day or night. He was frequently heard to roar out, that the ghoſt of Agrippina purſued him wherever he went, and that furies and

* Xiphilin. in Ner. Dio. lib. 61.

† Tacit. Ann. 14. c. 10.

and devils ſurrounded him. He took great pains to hide himſelf in dark and deſolate places, and immediately after, was impatient to quit them. So that thoſe places where he hoped to find moſt reſt and quiet, only ſerved to fill his mind with horror, dread, and deſpair, the juſt reward of his crimes.

OCTAVIA,

OCTAVIA,

Wife of NERO.

ONE would imagine it was decreed, that from Meſſalina and Claudius nothing good was to be expected; and that what Domitius Enobarbus had foretold of his own marriage with Agrippina, might juſtly be ſaid of them. Claudius * was a heavy ſtupid prince, nearer of kin to a beaſt than a man (as Seneca obſerves); and Meſſalina, a woman quite deſtitute of decency or modeſty. Notwithſtanding which, Octavia, whoſe wiſdom, prudence, and virtue, were as remarkable as her high birth, was the offspring of that union which promiſed ſo little benefit to mankind. She was eminently good in a moſt wicked and depraved age, and in a corrupted court, where vice reigned triumphant. Her conduct was always irreproachable; and the bad example of her mother carried in it no infection with regard to her. To her beauty, which was ſuch as few could be compared with, was added that noble ſimplicity, and moſt amiable modeſty, that never fails of captivating the hearts of as many as are witneſſes of it. She had the greateſt ſweetneſs of temper, without the leaſt tincture of affectation. In ſhort, ſhe poſſeſſed all thoſe virtues and good qualities that were worthy of a better reign. Never did princeſs more deſerve to be happy, and yet † there never was any who ſuffered more, nor whoſe patience was more put to the teſt; for ſhe did not know what it was to enjoy one quiet day, nor could her whole life be reckoned any other than one continued ſeries of bitterneſs and vexation; ſo that it may truly be

* Lud. in Claud. † Senec. in Octav.

be affirmed of Octavia, that ſhe died without ever having taſted the leaſt pleaſure.

She was but very young when the emperor her father had thoughts of finding out a proper match for her; and of all the men of diſtinction and high quality at Rome, who might have aſpired to that extraordinary honour, L. Silanus was thought the moſt worthy. He was remarkable for his illuſtrious birth and great merit, being * great-grandſon to Auguſtus; but this, advantageous and honourable as it was, did not recommend him to the love and eſteem of all mankind, ſo much as the virtues he was endued with. He had the ſweeteſt temper, together with the moſt beneficent diſpoſition, a noble air, a mind well turned, and a great ſoul; there was nothing, in ſhort, that one would wiſh to have altered in his whole perſon or conduct. The emperor had the greateſt regard for him, and therefore made choice of him for his ſon-in-law; in conſequence of which, he was ſolemnly betrothed to Octavia; and in order to render him more worthy of her, he granted him † ſeveral marks of honour that had never been given ‡ but to thoſe who had triumphed, together with ſeveral other privileges, that made him very conſiderable at Rome, where all thoſe that were deſcended from the Cæſars, were reſpected in an extraordinary manner.

This marriage would certainly have been accompliſhed, if Meſſalina had lived a little longer; but her immodeſty and cruelty had occaſioned her being put to death; and Agrippina, the proudeſt and moſt ambitious of women, being ſubſtituted in her place, prevailed upon the emperor to take other reſolutions more conformable to her views. This empreſs, whoſe love of power

* Tacit. Ann. 12. c. 3. † Idem Ann. 13. c. 1.
‡ Sueton. in Claud. 27.

power and authority was boundleſs, did not marry her uncle Claudius, but with a deſign to ruin his family, and cauſe the empire to fall into her own. This was what all her grand projects terminated in. She conſidered, that if Nero her ſon married the emperor's daughter, it would be taking a large ſtep towards the throne; and to bring about this marriage, ſhe had nothing to do but to bring off that which was agreed upon between Silanus and Octavia. To this end it was neceſſary to prove Silanus guilty of ſome crime that ſhould make him unworthy of being ſo nearly allied to the emperor.

Vitellius, who was cenſor at that time, undertook this infamous commiſſion. This unworthy magiſtrate (who by art as well as nature * was perfectly well qualified for inſinuating himſelf into the good graces of people in authority) was ever ready to advance his fortune at the expence of his honour and integrity. He thought he could not poſſibly do Agrippina a greater piece of ſervice, than by ruining Silanus, whom ſhe hated; and in order to ſucceed, he had recourſe to falſhood and impoſture. He accuſed him of imaginary crimes, ſince he could lay no real ones to his charge. At firſt he very cunningly ſpread reports that were calculated to tarniſh his character and reputation, and which Agrippina's emiſſaries took care to propagate and encourage. He himſelf alſo, as cenſor, reproached him with having too great a familiarity with his ſiſter Junia; they found pretences for this infamous aſperſion, and would needs have it, that Silanus's love and affection for his ſiſter ought to be conſtrued in a criminal ſenſe. Upon this falſe accuſation, which was without the leaſt proof, the corrupt cenſor declared him unworthy of his employments, ſo

* Tacit. Ann. 12. c. 4.

that Silanus, who was prætor, and performed the functions of his office with the greateſt honour and integrity, found his name expunged out of the liſt of ſenators, and was obliged to reſign the prætorſhip without knowing why or for what reaſon.

Claudius ſuffered himſelf to be impoſed upon by this artful accuſation; and the more eaſily, becauſe as he loved his daughter extremely, he would not give her a huſband that had ſettled his affections elſewhere; he therefore broke the deſigned marriage between Silanus and Octavia; * and the pretended criminal knowing full well that his enemies would not ſtop there, and that Agrippina, whoſe deep deſigns he eaſily penetrated, would never ceaſe to be revenged on a man who ſtood between her and her ambitious projects, whether out of deſpair, or that he was compelled to it, could not be known; but the event was, that he killed himſelf, and thereby avoided the perſecution that was preparing for him.

Nothing could be a greater diſappointment to Octavia, than the breaking off of his marriage; for no ſooner was it accompliſhed, than Agrippina ſet about promoting the other between her ſon Nero and Octavia, which ſhe had ſo much at heart. Pollio, who was to be conſul the next year, being gained over by Agrippina, propoſed this matter to Claudius; and he, who never acted but according as he was influenced by other people, came into it at once; ſo they were betrothed, and Nero, by that means, paved himſelf a way to the throne. There were others who had a hand in this work beſides Pollio; for all thoſe that were concerned in Meſſalina's death favoured the advancement of Nero, for fear that

if

* Tacit. Ann. 12. Senec. in Oct. Sueton. in Claud.

if Britannicus ſhould become emperor, he would revenge the death of his mother.

The ſucceſs that Agrippina had hitherto met with in all her undertakings continually encouraged her to form new ones; for beſides the abſolute power that ſhe had acquired over her huſband, whom ſhe held in a downright ſtate of ſlavery, ſhe had alſo the aſſiſtance of all that ſtupid emperor's favourites, for he was intirely governed by them, and was by no means capable of penetrating the deep and ambitious deſigns of his wife, as it plainly appeared, when they ſo eaſily prevailed on him to adopt Nero. Pallas, who was attached to the empreſs by a criminal commerce, took upon himſelf the management of that piece of work, and it did not coſt him much trouble to bring it about. The neceſſities of the republick, the youth of Britannicus, the precarious ſtate of heath the emperor was in, and the reaſonableneſs of giving him an aſſiſtant upon that account, were the arguments he made uſe of to that purpoſe; to which he added, the example of Auguſtus, who had adopted * the ſon of his wife Livia. All theſe reaſons convinced Claudius, that a moment ought not to be loſt in ſo neceſſary a work; ſo Domitius (as he was always called before) was initiated into the family of Claudius, and named Nero, by an adoption that was without precedent in the patrician family of the Claudians.

This adoption, which put Nero on a level with Britannicus, was authorized by the ſenate, (ever ready to ſubſcribe to the empreſs's will and pleaſure) and ratified by the moſt fulſome and flattering decrees; but all honeſt well-meaning people diſapproved of them in the higheſt degree, and commiſerated a poor prince, whoſe intereſts

* Tacit. Ann. 12.

except Narciſſus Vide p. 209 & following

were baſely deſerted, in order to build up a ſtranger upon his ruins. Heaven ſeemed to be provoked at this piece of injuſtice *, for the ſky was all on fire the day it was done, as if it were to repreſent the character and violent temper of Nero; and ſeemed to be a prediction of the flame that this wicked prince would one day kindle in Rome.

Octavia foreſaw all the conſequences of this unjuſt adoption, which cauſed her to ſhed many a bitter tear: ſhe could not help bewailing the condition of a brother ready to fall a victim to the ambition of a cruel ſtep-mother, whoſe principal aim was the deſtruction of all her family. In effect, all the neceſſary preparations previous to this marriage of Nero to Octavia were preſently diſpatched; and that there might remain no obſtacle in the way †, the princeſs was ingrafted into another family, by a ſimilar adoption, that a brother might not appear to marry a ſiſter.

Theſe nuptials were celebrated with more precipitation than pomp, but Nero was full of joy and ſatisfaction; not that he cared for Octavia, but becauſe it gave him a near proſpect of the throne. Octavia, on the contrary, who was ſacrificed to the ambition of Agrippina, was overwhelmed with melancholy. Agrippina's wiſhes were now accompliſhed; and having taken ſuch meaſures as could ſcarce fail of ſecuring the empire to her ſon, ſhe then thought of nothing but how to ſtrike the important blow that ſhe had long meditated in her heart.

Claudius's imprudence haſtened his own deſtruction; for one day at table he happened (in the heat of wine, which was no new thing to him

* Dio. lib. 60. Xiphilin. in Ner. † Dio lib. 61.

him) to ſay, that his marriages had been unfortunate, but that ſooner or latter he would find a way to be revenged on thoſe who affronted him. This was enough for Agrippina, who thought it high time to prevent the effects of theſe threatenings. Locuſta[a], very ſkilful in the art of ſhortning life *, was immediately ſet to work; and Claudius, a few days after, having eaten ſome muſhrooms, found the end of his life in that ragout, which he was very fond of. That emperor was deified, and Nero was ſaluted emperor, to the prejudice of Britannicus, who was the lawful heir.

It is eaſy to imagine what muſt have been Octavia's grief upon this occaſion; for, young as ſhe was †, ſhe knew both the cauſe and the author of the emperor's death. But the art of diſſembling is of very great uſe in courts. Octavia looked upon herſelf as a ſtranger in her father's palace, and was taught, by ſo many misfortunes, to conceal her true ſentiments. She found it of the greateſt importance to her to ſeem ignorant of many things, and had often occaſion to put this in practice. As Nero did not marry her, but to make uſe of her as a ſtep to mount the throne by, he never ſhewed the leaſt inclination for her; ſo, as ſoon as he was become emperor, he placed his affections elſewhere, and intirely deſpiſed and ſlighted his wife, whoſe chaſtity was univerſally acknowledged, and whoſe extraordinary beauty

* Tacit. Ann. 12. Sueton. in Claud. Dio. Eutrop.
† Tacit. Ann. 13.

[a] Locuſta was a famous poiſoner, who did great miſchief in Rome, for which ſhe had been put in priſon; but Nero gave her her liberty, in order to make uſe of her for poiſoning prince Britannicus. Galba put her to death.

was the more admired, as ſhe made uſe of no arts to heighten or ſet it off.

Actea was the firſt perſon that made an impreſſion on his heart. He became exceſſively in love with her *; and this paſſion ſeemed to be authoriſed by the ſilence of his preceptors, who connived at it through a falſe policy, or rather approved of his debaucheries; alledging, that it was better to allow of theſe criminal pleaſures, than that the chaſtity and modeſty of the Roman ladies ſhould be violated by the impetuoſity of this emperor's lewd inclinations. But their true motive was, to make uſe of Actea by way of counterpoiſe to the power of Agrippina, imagining that their own authority would be more conſiderable as the empreſs's decreaſed. Thus Nero, meeting with no oppoſition, gave himſelf up to the gratifying of his appetites without the leaſt reſerve.

Some of his friends were very ſenſible of the ill treatment Octavia received from him, and had honour and courage enough to tell him of it; but theſe remonſtrances were in vain, and produced no good effects on a prince that was not always in humour to liſten to them, ſo they only ſerved to increaſe rather than cure the evil; for Nero, who conſulted nothing but his paſſions, anſwered brutally, Octavia † ought to be content with the ſimple ornaments of a wife; and would probably have divorced her then, if Burrus, his governor, ſeeing how far he carried matters, had not told him, with a good deal of liberty and reſolution, that if he muſt needs put away Octavia, he ought at leaſt to give her back her portion; meaning by that, that he was obliged to her for the empire.

If

* Sueton. in Ner. Tacit. Ann. 13. † Sueton. in Ner. Tacit. Dio.

If the emperor's love of Actea had cauſed no other affliction to Octavia than the loſs of his heart, ſhe would never have given herſelf any trouble about the matter, for it gave her no ſort of jealouſy or uneaſineſs. She ſaw him, with great indifference, carrying on his deteſtable amours; and thought herſelf ſufficiently revenged by the contempt that this unworthy emperor brought upon himſelf, in yielding to the ſeducing careſſes of a proſtitute. But Actea ſet no great value on his affections; for it was his fortune, not his love, that ſhe aimed at, and the throne was what ſhe aſpired to. Full of theſe flattering hopes, ſhe employed all her charms to engage Nero, and found him ſo ſuſceptible, that ſhe ſoon perceived ſhe had all the diſpoſitions ſhe could wiſh for that were neceſſary to promote her ſucceſs; corruption of heart and manners, averſion to virtue, a natural propenſity to vice, hatred for Octavia, every thing, in ſhort, ſeemed to favour this coquette in her ambitious deſigns.

Beſides, Nero was plunged in the moſt infamous pleaſures, and ſurrounded with debauched and effeminate youths, whoſe ſentiments were as low as their birth, and from whom he could learn nothing but what was vile and baſe in the greateſt degree. Burrus and Seneca choſe rather to keep at a diſtance, and neglect their duty, when they ſaw their labour was to no purpoſe, and that their inſtructions were thrown away upon the depraved nature of their pupil, who deſpiſed their leſſons and precepts. On the contrary, Otho, that famous debauchee, whom a reſemblance of manners had recommended to the emperor; Petronius, ſo knowing in the art of inventing pleaſures, and chief manager of Nero's diverſions; Creſcent, a vile wretch that had

* Tacit. Sueton. Dio.

been a ſlave; Vatinius, who weary of ſtruggling with miſery in a poor ſhoemaker's ſhop, where he had paſſed his younger days, had found out the ſecret of inſinuating himſelf into the good graces of the emperor, by the moſt ſhameful means, and in ſpite of the deformities of his body, which was crooked and disfigured; Tigillinus, who from the meaneſt extraction was raiſed to the higheſt pitch of grandeur by all manner of wickedneſs; Anicet, another freedman, who afterwards was the worthy inſtrument he made choice of when he put his mother to death; Pythagoras, with whom he cauſed himſelf to be ſolemnly married, to gratify his monſtrous lewdneſs with deteſtable and new-invented pleaſures, being quite weary of ſuch as were in the ordinary way; Sporus *, whom he had the folly to marry as a wife, after a ridiculous attempt to make him change his ſex; Senecio, Serenus, and an infinite number of ſuch like excrements of the empire, were the worthy maſters and patterns that Nero imitated and copied after; ſo that if he had not been naturally vicious, he could not but become ſo by infection.

Among all theſe unworthy favourites, and baſe flatterers, Senecio † was the perſon he choſe for his confident in his amour with Actea, becauſe his inclinations were the moſt conformable to his own. This great familiarity was inſupportable to Agrippina, who had often attempted to break through it, eſpecially when ſhe knew that Senecio favoured her ſon's intrigue with Actea, for ſhe could not bear to have that courtezan put upon a level with her in point of authority; and Nero, who had not yet diveſted himſelf of all humanity, but pretended to keep ſome ſort of meaſures with his mother, quitted Senecio,

* Sueton. in Ner. 28. † Tacit. Ann. 13.

Senecio for a time, and made uſe of Serenus for his amour, who pretended to be in love with Actea himſelf, and publickly gave out that the preſents Nero ſent to his miſtreſs by him were his own. But theſe reſtraints did not long ſuit with the inclinations of Nero, who was not of a temper to bear with ſuch tedious and troubleſome formalities: beſides, it is no eaſy matter to conceal a violent paſſion ſo as that it ſhall not break out ſome time or other. Thus Nero, being weary of diſſembling, began to ſee Actea with leſs reſerve and circumſpection, and ſoon after, without affecting ſecrecy at all, gave himſelf intirely up to Senecio, and deſpiſing the remonſtrances and threatenings of his mother, reſolved to marry Actea.

Two great obſtacles ſtood in the way of this marriage; Octavia was to be divorced, and a woman that had been a ſlave was to be exalted to the throne of the empire. The firſt would have been a flagrant injuſtice; and the ſecond, a novelty that would have been thought monſtrous. To put away Octavia, could not chuſe but provoke the ſenate, and cauſe a revolt among the people, who perfectly adored the family of the Cæſars. To marry Actea would have been deſpiſing all the orders of the town, and infinitely to degrade the imperial majeſty, by placing a ſlave on the throne. Nero's love, however, would ſoon have triumphed over all theſe difficulties, in ſpite of his preceptors remonſtrances, were it not for the fear he had, leſt the people's minds ſhould be ſo alineated from him by this marriage, as to incline them towards the young prince Britannicus, whom he thought already but too formidable. Theſe conſiderations were what ſtopped his career. He had invented reaſons (ſuch as they were) for putting away Octavia, and gave

himſelf but little trouble about getting them approved of by the ſenate; having got the better of thoſe timid and ſlaviſh perſons, of whom it was compoſed, who ſacrificing their duty and honour to the advancement of their fortune, conformed themſelves intirely to Nero's will, or rather to all his crimes, not being aſhamed of diſhonouring their character by a moſt ſervile and mercenary complaiſance. Actea's obſcure birth was not an unſurmountable obſtacle; for Nero had reſolved to make it appear, that ſhe was of royal extraction; and for this purpoſe two perſons * of dignity, who had been conſuls, had promiſed, by a ſhameful condeſcenſion, to ſwear, that ſhe had kings for her anceſtors. This fabulous genealogy was to have put her, whoſe father had been a miſerable ſlave, upon an equality with the nobleſt lady in Rome. And Nero, to authoriſe this pretended royalty of his miſtreſs, adopted her into the family of Attalus king of Pergamus in Aſia, who was poſſeſſed of immenſe riches, and dying without children, left the Roman people his heirs; ſo that every thing was diſpoſed for the celebration of this marriage, when making the reflections which have been already mentioned, he bethought himſelf that, before he ſhould venture to make ſuch an experiment as might not be approved of by all the world, it behoved him to get rid of Britannicus, who was able to form a powerful party againſt him, as his pretenſions to the throne were univerſally acknowledged †. This young prince, who was juſt entered into the fifteenth year of his age, was by no means to be deſpiſed, as well on account of his perſonal merit, as of that affection which ſubjects always have for their lawful prince; beſides that, Agrippina, who had fallen

* Sueton. in Ner. Xphilin. † Tacit. Ann. 12.

fallen out with Nero, was continually threatening him with her intention of carrying Britannicus into the camp, of diſcovering to all the world the iniquitous proceedings that had been carried on, her inceſtuous marriage, the unjuſt and violent death of Silanus, the murder of Claudius; and in ſhort, that ſhe would let all the earth know that Nero only governed the empire by commiſſion; and that it was high time to reſtore it to the ſon of Claudius, who was the true and lawful heir.

Nero did not reliſh theſe terrible threatenings, which made a deep impreſſion on him; he could not help being prodigiouſly alarmed, and from thenceforward looked upon Britannicus as his greateſt enemy. He therefore determined to cut him off by poiſon, not daring to uſe any violent methods. Pollio, tribune of a prætorian cohort, (a man deſtitute of honour) was the infamous inſtrument this deteſtable prince made uſe of to take away the life of Britannicus, ſon of his emperor, his benefactor, his collegue, his brother-in-law, and his brother by adoption. Locuſta, a famous poiſoner by trade, (who, as an hiſtorian ſays, was for a long time one of the principal ſprings of the government) was employed upon this occaſion. * She was at that time in priſon, under the guard of Pollio, for exerciſing her profeſſion a little too freely at the expence of a great many people's lives; and her liberty was promiſed her, provided ſhe did the buſineſs effectually. Theſe terms were immediately accepted, and ſhe prepared a poiſon for Britannicus, which was given him by his own preceptors, but it had not its effect; whether it was contrived weak, for fear that if it operated too powerfully, there might be room for ſuſpicion; or

* Tacit. Ann. 12. Sueton.

or perhaps the prince might be ſpeedily delivered of it by a natural evacuation; Nero, who did not underſtand ſuch trifling work, threatened Pollio, and ordered him to put Locuſta to death, being perſuaded, that one or other of them had, on purpoſe, fruſtrated his intention, that they might not be liable to the odium of this horrid piece of iniquity, but if it muſt be done, that all the blame might be thrown upon the emperor. But they promiſed to give Britannicus ſo ſubtil and violent a poiſon, that he ſhould be carried off inſtantly. It was accordingly prepared in the emperor's chamber, and in his preſence: and to remove all cauſe of miſtruſt from the young prince, it was given him at table, where nothing was ever ſerved up, that had not firſt been taſted. They preſented him a meſs of ſoup that was boiling-hot, and it was taſted before his face, becauſe the poiſon was not yet put into it. The prince, juſt as they imagined, found it too hot, and deſired that a little water might be poured in to cool it. This was immediately done; but the water was ſo ſtrong of the poiſon, that as ſoon as the prince taſted it he fell down dead, loſing, in a moment, all the faculties of life and reſpiration.

Octavia, who was preſent at this tragical ſpectacle, and whom Nero, to conceal his crime, endeavoured to perſuade that it was only one of thoſe fits which he ſaid Britannicus was ſubject to, was reduced to the cruel neceſſity of ſmothering her grief, that ſhe might not ſeem to ſuſpect Nero; and to affect a calm and ſerene countenance, whilſt her heart was labouring under the moſt bitter affliction. She had certainly the greateſt reaſon to be grieved; for by his death, the celebrated family of the Claudians was extinct. She had always reckoned upon her brother as the only perſon that might one day

occaſion

occaſion a happy change in her condition. For though the bad treatment they continually gave her excited the compaſſion of all the world, yet her friends, who for the moſt part were timid, and without power, could only afford her their good wiſhes, but none were willing and able to do her any eſſential ſervice.

Britannicus's ſudden death was alſo a mortal ſtroke to Agrippina; for as ſhe had no hand in that murder, ſhe was aſtoniſhed when ſhe ſaw him periſh by ſuch a horrid perfidiouſneſs. She mixed her tears with thoſe of Octavia, when they were at liberly to indulge their grief without witneſſes; the empreſs embraced her with the greateſt demonſtrations of affection, and gave her the moſt ſenſible marks of a ſincere love and friendſhip; there was a conformity in their condition, that inſpired Agrippina with ſuch humane ſentiments as ſhe had till then been a ſtranger to. But this laſt abominable action of Nero's was not the only vexation ſhe had to undergo; for the favour and credit Poppea was in, gave her ſtill more anxiety. Nero had began to be not ſo fond of Actea as formerly; but he was ſcarce delivered from the ſlavery of that intrigue, than he fell into a ſtate of captivity more compleat and more durable than the other, by becoming ſo exceſſively enamoured of Sabina Poppea, that nothing would content him but marrying her; and becauſe the authority of his mother was an inſurmountable obſtacle to the accompliſhment of his deſires, he reſolved to ſhake off that intolerable yoke, by putting to death her who had given him life. Poppea had taken a great deal of pains to bring him to this; and Nero, not being able to refuſe her any thing, but arming himſelf againſt all remorſe, with the higheſt ingratitude,

tude, and moſt barbarous fury, determined to commit an execrable parricide, and dip his hands in the blood of that mother who had procured him the empire. Thus providence was pleaſed to permit that this ambitious empreſs, who had perpetrated ſo many crimes to exalt an unnatural ſon to the throne, ſhould meet with a juſt reward, and receive from that ſon the puniſhment ſhe deſerved. This ought to teach parents to be more moderate in the deſires they form for the aggrandizing of their children; and to expect better fruits from a good education and examples of piety and virtue, than from the greateſt fortune they can poſſibly procure them.

Octavia was now the only victim left, to be ſacrificed to the brutal cruelty of Nero, and the reſtleſs jealouſy of Poppea. As it would have been very dangerous to attempt any thing by way of violence againſt the life of a princeſs who was loved and admired by all the world, and whoſe conduct was irreproachable; ſo, on the other hand, it was no eaſy matter to do the buſineſs by poiſon, without its being perceived. The emperor therefore reſolved to be himſelf the executioner of his poor innocent wife, and ſtrangle her ſecretly; but meeting with difficulties in all theſe methods, he determined at laſt to divorce her. This was the expedient which the infamous flatterers about the emperor found out to rid him of this incomparable princeſs. Thoſe ſycophants, who were more ſolicitous about their own intereſts than for the honour of their maſter, and had nothing ſo much at heart, as how to perpetuate their power and authority by flattering his paſſions. Tigellinus was the chief of them. That inſolent favourite had ſo inſinuated himſelf into the good graces of the emperor, that he was the

companion

companion of all his debauches, and generally the contriver of them. As the authority of the emperor was in a manner veſted in him, and in whoſe friendſhip he had the ſecret of maintaining himſelf by the moſt infamous methods, he made no ſcruple of affronting all the perſons of quality and diſtinction in Rome, who dreaded his power and malice. In his whole perſon was obſerved a certain brutal air that made him feared, even by thoſe, who, a while ago, had never ſo much as heard of him; and joining inſolence *, which generally accompanies good fortune, to the unpoliſhed rudeneſs which is always the conſequence of a bad education, he troubled himſelf about nothing but how to preſerve the credit and riches that he had acquired by artifice and iniquity. As he had a mean ſoul, mercenary, and corrupted by a long practice of the moſt infamous vices, and was capable of every crime, he found it an eaſy matter to keep his intereſt by all the wicked means he could think of [b]. It muſt not therefore be wondered at, if (being ſuch as he has been deſcribed) he adviſed Nero to divorce

* Tacit. Ann. 14.

[b] Sophonius Tigellinus, who was become extremely odious by his vices and wickedneſs, had the good fortune, during the reign of Galba, to preſerve not only his life, but his power, notwithſtanding the cries and importunity of the people, who earneſtly deſired his death. But the emperor Otho, to ingratiate himſelf, granted their requeſt. Tigellinus was then at Sinueſſa, and when they brought him this diſmal news, he committed a crime which in itſelf deſerved the puniſhment that was decreed him; for this infamous and corrupt man had the courage to prevent it by cutting his own throat with a razor.

vorce the virtuous Octavia, and marry the impudent Poppea. Reaſons were ſought after to authoriſe this divorce; and becauſe the princeſs's virtue could never be called in queſtion, they were forced to have recourſe to her not having children, and made that a pretence for intreating Nero to put her away, that he might have ſucceſſors by another wife. Upon this the empreſs was ſeparated from her huſband; and in lieu of the empire, which was her portion, they gave her the inheritance of Plautus, and aſſigned her Burrus's houſe to live in, which was looked upon as a ſad preſage for her.

This was not ſufficient for Poppea. Octavia's preſence alarmed her ambition, and ſhe thought it was of the greateſt importance to her to get rid of ſo diſagreeable an object; but it was neceſſary to lay ſome crime to her charge, for which ſhe might deſerve to be baniſhed, and it was impoſſible to find any true one. Tigellinus, very fertile in miſchievous expedients, found no difficulty in this, but chearfully undertook to make her as guilty as they pleaſed. One of Octavia's domeſticks, being corrupted by that infamous courtier, became the accuſer of his miſtreſs. He depoſed, that the empreſs had a gallant name Eucer, a ſlave, and native of Alexandria, a player on the flute by profeſſion; and, upon this malicious accuſation, the moſt chaſte and virtuous Octavia was to be proved a proſtitute. Her women, and the ladies that attended her, were put to the torture; and in order to extort from them a falſe evidence againſt her, the moſt frightful inſtruments of puniſhment, and ſuch as were moſt capable of ſhaking the firmeſt reſolution, were diſplayed before their eyes to intimidate them. They imagined they had gained

their

their point, when ſome of them, being extremely terrified at the dreadful ſight, yielded to their importunity: but if the force and violence of the torments, the threatenings of Tigellinus, the weakneſs of their ſex, and the preſence of Nero's infernal miniſters, and Poppea's jealouſy, prevailed upon ſome of thoſe poor women to ſtagger in their duty, by depoſing contrary to their conſciences, (having no other method of procuring a ceſſation to their torments, but by wrongfully accuſing their innocent miſtreſs) yet there were others who, in the midſt of their ſufferings, gave evidence to the truth with wonderful intrepidity, openly publiſhing the empreſs's innocence, and juſtly praiſing her wiſdom, prudence and modeſty, their fidelity being proof againſt the torments that were made uſe of to corrupt it. Thus the horrid trick was unmaſked, to the unſpeakable ſhame of Octavia's enemies. The truth was victorious, and this black accuſation only ſerved to give a new luſtre to that virtue which it was deſigned to blaſt. Tigellinus, Octavia's bittereſt enemy, was put to the greateſt confuſion by one of theſe women, who had the boldneſs and courage to affront him to his face; for as he was interrogating her, and aſking her, in his brutal manner, if it was not true, that her miſtreſs had proſtituted herſelf to Eucer the muſician, ſhe anſwered *, with a generous ſort of contempt, that the leaſt neat part about Octavia was infinitely purer than his ſcandalous mouth. A mortifying reproach, which could not but have killed him with ſhame, if ſo baſe a ſoul had been capable of it.

But by the moſt monſtrous iniquity and injuſtice, the empreſs's innocence, that had been proved

* Tacit. Ann. 14.

proved beyond all contradiction, and was univerſally acknowledged, was forced to give way to infernal calumny and falſhood. Octavia was baniſhed into Campania, and guards ſet upon her as if ſhe had been a ſtate priſoner, whoſe dangerous practices were much to be feared. The people ſoon gave evident marks of their inclination and affection for the empreſs, who was treated ſo unworthily; they even ſhewed it in a manner that was neither timid nor ſilent, for they exclaimed openly againſt this unjuſt baniſhment. On every ſide nothing was to be heard but murmurings and complaints againſt Nero, and indignation againſt Poppea, who had occaſioned this exile. The emperor was ſoon informed of this, and was mightily alarmed at it; for nothing being more to be apprehended than a popular fury in its firſt heat, as there is no barrier capable of ſtemming ſuch a torrent. This had ſuch an effect upon him, that, pretending to be very ſorry he had baniſhed Octavia, he recalled her immediately.

As ſoon as ſhe made her appearance in Rome, every heart was filled with joy and chearfulneſs. The people demonſtrated it in ſuch a manner, as was not very reſpectful to the emperor's miſtreſs; for they threw down the ſtatues that had been erected to her honour, and at the ſame time raiſed up thoſe of the empreſs that were pulled down, crowning them with flowers, carrying her images about the ſtreets in triumph, and into the temples with the ſame veneration as to thoſe of the gods. They gave great commendations to Nero for having retaken his lawful ſpouſe. One might ſee ſpring up in every countenance, that ſerenity which the exile of the empreſs had baniſhed; and nothing was ſpoke of but pleaſures and diverſions. In ſhort, every body gave ſuch

ſincere

ſincere demonſtrations of their ſatisfaction, that it looked as if every particular perſon had made his fortune by the return of the empreſs.

This exceſs of publick joy had very bad conſequences for Octavia. The haughty Poppea, more exaſperated than ever, becauſe of the inſults that ſhe had received, and the perfect contempt that the people had ſhewn for her upon this occaſion in overthrowing her ſtatues, making reflections that this fury of the people had intimidated Nero, and had in a manner compelled him to recal Octavia, did not doubt but the emperor, ſince he ſo much regarded the humours and caprice of the mob, would, one time or other, ſettle his affections again upon the empreſs, and conſequently that ſhe herſelf would, ſooner or later, fall a ſacrifice to the good of the publick; ſhe therefore employed all her charms and cunning to prevail upon Nero to baniſh Octavia again. She threw herſelf at his feet, and ſhedding tears in abundance, told him, with a moſt inſinuating air, that it was wonderful he ſhould, in ſuch a manner, permit his authority to be deſpiſed, and ſtoop ſo low as to condeſcend to the will and pleaſure of a mob; and that their having got the better of him upon this occaſion, was a ſhameful triumph of the people over the prince; that it was the firſt inſtance of an emperor's yielding to an inſolent multitude, to whoſe caprices he proſtituted his dignity, when he could tamely ſuffer a perſon, whom he honoured with his affection, to be groſly affronted; that this riſing of the people was an indication of what he had reaſon to fear for his own perſon, if they were to be humoured at this rate; that Octavia's power was more to be apprehended than he imagined, and that ſhe had

had given a ſpecimen of it in this late mutiny of the people, who had inſolently preſcribed laws to him, in forcing him to recal a perſon he had thought fit to baniſh. In ſhort, ſhe knew how to manage him ſo well, that Nero, imagining both his honour and his ſafety required that Octavia ſhould die, or rather, not being able to refuſe this victim to the jealouſy of Poppea, with whom he was rather bewitched than enamoured, he ſigned an order for her execution. It was agreed upon that it ſhould not be in Rome, for fear of exciting a ſedition; but that Octavia ſhould be ſent away again, and then it would be an eaſy matter to compaſs it.

The great difficulty was to fix ſome crime upon her with a tolerable appearance of probability, for that ſhe was accuſed of before was not at all credible. The declaration of Octavia's women had put that affair in a clear light, and was a deciſive proof of their miſtreſs's innocence. But if thoſe proofs had not been ſo ſtrong as they were, the high eſteem ſhe was in, and her unblameable conduct, would have ſufficiently excuſed her. They therefore found it neceſſary to add, to the crime of adultery, that of attempting to trouble the ſtate; and to cauſe her to be accuſed by ſome body who was to charge her, by her own confeſſion, and who ſhould be in ſuch an employment as that there ſhould be a probability of her making uſe of him to cabal with in order to form a party; and to make that perſon intirely her friend, ſhe was to purchaſe his intereſt at the expence of her honour. To invent ſuch a horrible calumny, and ſtand out in it with impudence againſt a princeſs whoſe innocence and prudence was known to all the world, certainly required the baſeſt and wickedeſt wretch that could be procured, and ſuch a one

one Anicet was thought to be. He was commander of the gallys at Miſſena, and the ſame perſon that had been employed in the death of Agrippina.

They were not at all deceived in the man they had made choice of; it was not to be ſuppoſed he ſhould refuſe to commit any crime, after having ſpilt the blood of Agrippina. He was ſent for; and Nero told him it was not enough that he had delivered him from his mother, he expected he ſhould alſo free him from the plots and bad deſigns of his wife; that, in order to do this, it was not neceſſary he ſhould put her to death himſelf, or have recourſe to any other violent meaſures; it would be ſufficient, if he affirmed, that he had committed adultery with her. The emperor aſſured him he could not poſſibly do him a greater piece of ſervice, and promiſed that he ſhould be extremely well rewarded; and (that it might not be in his power to refuſe) he told him, that after having truſted him with a ſecret of ſuch importance, he could not do otherwiſe than put him to death, if he made any ſcruples, that it might not be poſſible for him to reveal it.

Anicet, who had no reputation to be ſolicitous about, having forfeited that by a number of crimes, was eaſily perſuaded to undertake this work of iniquity; and accordingly, being tempted by Nero's promiſes, and intimidated by his threats, he confeſſed, that he had been guilty of adultery with the empreſs, and affirmed it before the emperor's friends, or rather before the accomplices in his crimes, who were all people capable of any miſchief, and had been aſſembled on purpoſe. This action compleated Anicet's wickedneſs, and Octavia's misfortunes, who was in one moment accuſed, judged, and condemned.

ed. Never was cauſe leſs examined into, for all the judges were of the ſame opinion; and the conſequence of Anicet's confeſſion was, that ſhe was immediately ſentenced to be baniſhed, as if ſhe had been convicted by the fulleſt evidence in the world. Anicet's crime was alſo taken into conſideration; he was baniſhed to Sardinia, but care was taken to let him want for nothing as long as he lived.

The equity of this ſentence was very much called in queſtion, or rather, nobody doubted the partiality of it; becauſe the aſſembly was made up of people without honour, and intirely devoted to Nero and Poppea. The emperor publiſhed aloud the traiterous deſigns that Octavia had formed againſt him and the empire; and that ſhe had not been aſhamed to corrupt Anicet, the captain of the gallys, and on whom ſhe prevailed to act jointly with her in this conſpiracy, at the expence of her honour, proſtituting herſelf ſhamefully to him, in order to make ſure of the fleet. But in vain do people endeavour to diſguiſe falſhood, for it is generally diſcovered by the very maſk that was deſigned to hide it; and the precautions that are moſt commonly taken to carry on a cheat, happen to be the means of its being found out. For Nero (to make this ſtory of Octavia's adultery go down the better) reported, that ſhe had cauſed herſelf to miſcarry, in order to conceal her guilt and ſhame from her huſband and the world, without recollecting that the firſt time he had a mind to divorce her, (not being able with all their malice to lay any crime to her charge) he was forced to have recourſe to her barrenneſs, which, he ſaid, was ſuch as rendered her incapable of giving him ſucceſſors. This (to the great ſhame and confuſion of Nero) proved

proved the falſhood of his aſſertion about the miſcarriage.

As to Anicet's having owned his crime, and which was mentioned as an undeniable proof of Octavia's guilt, it was evident, that it ought to have no weight; and that the confeſſion of that infamous officer did not deſerve any credit. The aſſertion of a man who had committed ſo many crimes, ought never to be believed; nor was it reaſonable that Agrippina's executioner ſhould be deemed an equitable accuſer of Octavia. But how could it be expected, that juſtice ſhould take place in ſo partial an aſſembly, made up of mercenary courtiers and ſycophants that were intirely devoted to Nero.

In the mean time unfortunate virtue was ſacrificed without pity to triumphant jealouſy, and the falſe and imaginary crimes of Octavia were expiated by a puniſhment that was but too real. This unhappy empreſs was baniſhed into the iſland of Pandateria; and never did any baniſhed perſon excite ſo great nor ſo juſt a compaſſion in the hearts of the Romans. People ſpoke of the exile of Agrippina and her ſiſters, and that of Julia daughter of Auguſtus, but it was remembered, that the firſt had found many comforts in the place of their baniſhment to mitigate their grief, and that none of them ſuffered without having but too well deſerved it: that after all, their puniſhment had been preceded by many a happy day they had paſſed at court; and that the pleaſures they had formerly experienced, might in ſome ſort counterbalance their misfortunes. But they ſaw nothing to comfort Octavia, nor any thing to leſſen their ſorrow and concern for her cruel treatment; ſince, without ever having in her whole life given the leaſt reaſon to be com-

plained of, ſhe was unmercifully puniſhed for imaginary faults, of which the bare accuſation was worſe to her than death.

She was conducted to the place of her exile; and on the road ſuch rudeneſs and incivility was ſhewn her, as they ſhould have been aſhamed to commit againſt the moſt vulgar and mean criminal. She was perpetually ſtunned with the noiſe of centurions and ſoldiers, who adding the authority of the emperor to their natural inſolence, treated her without the leaſt pity or compaſſion, which ſufficiently demonſtrated the orders they had received not to ſpare her in the leaſt.

But though this behaviour of her guards (equally cruel and injurious) were but ſo many ſad preſages of her laſt misfortune, and ſhe might eaſily read the ſentence of her death in the conduct of her perſecutors, yet ſhe could not prevail upon herſelf willingly to renounce that life which was ſo loaden with bitterneſs and affliction. She was but twenty years old [c], and might reaſonably flatter herſelf with the hopes of enjoying ſome fortunate moments if ſhe ſurvived Nero, the author of all her miſery; and according to all appearance, his reign would be but ſhort, as is generally that of tyrants; for that unworthy emperor was doing every thing in his power to pull his own deſtruction upon himſelf, as well by an infamous indulgence in all manner of monſtrous pollutions, as by the horrible cruelties he every day committed.

But Octavia never had the pleaſure of ſeeing this happy change in her fortune; for ſcarce was ſhe

[c] Ac puella viceſimo ætatis anno inter centuriones & milites præſagio malorum jam à vita exempta, nondum tamen morte acquieſcebat. Tacit.

ſhe arrived at the place of her exile, than notice was given her to prepare for death. The charming and virtuous empreſs could not hear this dreadful ſentence without trembling. She pleaded, that being divorced from Nero, ſhe ought not any longer to be reckoned his wife; and as ſhe had renounced that quality, and all pretenſions to it in favour of Poppea, they ought to ſpare her life, ſince ſhe did not intend to interrupt the good fortune of her rival; that ſhe would, from thenceforward, look upon herſelf as only ſiſter to the emperor, and conſequently it would not be in her power, if ſhe were ſo diſpoſed, to be any obſtacle to Poppea's deſigns.

She invoked Germanicus (from whom both ſhe and Nero were deſcended) and called upon Agrippina, who, though ſhe had been the cauſe of all her misfortunes, had nevertheleſs treated her with leſs cruelty. But neither her tears nor ſighs could ſoften the hard hearts of thoſe who were commanded to put her to death. They bound her and opened her veins; but the blood flowing but ſlowly, on account of the great terror ſhe was in, they ſtifled her in a bath, and with her, the beauty, virtue, and graces of the beſt empreſs that ever was born of the family of the Cæſars.

Octavia's death put an end to Poppea's jealouſy, but not to her cruelty; for not being content with having ſacrificed this illuſtrious victim to her hatred, ſhe would needs have her head brought to her. This object, ſo worthy of compaſſion, was to her a charming ſpectacle; ſhe feaſted her eyes with it, and Rome had the inexpreſſible mortification of ſeeing, in the hands of an infamous proſtitute, the head of the moſt worthy princeſs that ever honoured the empire.

The people were in the utmoſt affliction for the tragical end of this poor unhappy empreſs. Her death was honoured with tears that were never ſhed with more ſincerity, and which were certainly due to the merit of Octavia, who was deſerving of a better deſtiny.

POPPEA,

POPPEA,

Second Wife of NERO.

THERE is nothing ſo bad but what a perſon over fond of power is capable of. He will make no ſcruple to violate the moſt ſacred laws, to break through the ſtricteſt bonds, or commit the moſt heinous crimes to gain his ends. The hiſtory of Poppea, will furniſh us with ſufficient proofs of this aſſertion; for if ſhe had not been ambitious, ſhe would not have been guilty of ſo many proſtitutions, ſhe would not have perſecuted the innocence of Octavia, nor have prevailed upon Nero to murder his mother.

She was daughter of T. Ollius, who had formerly been quæſtor, * and who would have obtained the greateſt employments, † if he had not been involved in the misfortunes of Sejanus, whoſe friendſhip, after he was diſgraced, was (to thoſe who partook of it) as great a misfortune, as his hatred was in his proſperity to thoſe who were ſo unhappy as to feel its effects. Her mother was that famous Poppea, whoſe beauty and gallantries made ſo much noiſe in Claudius's reign.

Sabina Poppea, was ſo named after her grandmother. As for her father, tho' he had not much to boaſt of in point of birth or capacity, yet he had always ſkill enough to inſinuate himſelf into the good graces of the emperors; who employed him ſometimes at the head of the armies, where he performed ſuch actions, and ‡ behaved ſo well, as to entitle him to the honour of a triumph, and the conſulſhip; and at other

* Sueton. in Ner. † Tacit. Ann. 13. ‡ Tacit. Ann. 6.

times in the government of provinces, where he paſſed ſome part of his life in continual fears and alarms from the malice of thoſe falſe accuſers, who were ſo much encouraged and liſtened to by Tiberius. He dreaded then ſo much, that to prevent the conſequences of thoſe miſchievous creatures, he choſe § to put an end to his life, which he did with great precipitation, as if he had a mind to diſappoint that fortune, whoſe caprices he was ſo much afraid of.

Poppea had received from nature every advantage, except modeſty. She was reckoned the moſt compleat beauty in the world. Her charms were of that ſort which ſtrikes at firſt ſight, and forces the admiration of all beholders. Her countenance and features were beyond all expreſſion, heightened by youth, and improved by a ſweet and delightful air, which became her infinitely. She had a peculiar grace in ſpeaking, and her voice had ſuch a ſweetneſs as was not to be reſiſted; an enchanting vivacity and ſprightlineſs in her converſation. In ſhort ſhe was all over charms; which ſhe knew how to heighten and ſet off to advantage, with the moſt captivating and becoming ornaments of dreſs; ſo that if ſhe had poſſeſſed good qualities proportionable to her beauty, ſhe would have been the moſt accompliſhed perſon in the univerſe. But whether the bad example of her mother had influenced her ſo far as to compel her, in a manner, to give herſelf up to vice, or whether her natural inclinations to debauchery and libertiniſm were ſo violent, that every conſideration muſt give way to them; or laſtly, that her ambition was the cauſe of all her irregularities; it is certain, that ſhe abandoned herſelf entirely to them, and made ſo ſhameful and bad a uſe of her charms, that

§ Dio. lib. 57.

that as a hiſtorian obſerves, ſhe made no difference between her huſbands and her gallants. Her duty and reputation were never put in balance with her ambition; the deſire ſhe had to advance herſelf, extinguiſhed every ſentiment of honour, and ſhe never failed to ſacrifice to her vanity, all the advantages of her mind and perſon, whenever they could be inſtrumental to her preferment. As to her wit, ſhe had as much of it as enabled her to act her part very well in company, and could give it ſuch a turn as made her agreeable to people of all characters; ſhe was, upon ſome occaſions, as good a prude as ſhe was a coquette upon others.

She paſſed her youth in her mother's houſe, which was a ſchool of debauchery and proſtitution; there it was that ſhe received the firſt homage, of thoſe who came in crouds to make their offerings at the ſhrine of her beauty; againſt the powerful attraction of which, it was next to impoſſible for any man to defend himſelf. At firſt indeed ſhe received all her adorers with a good deal of indifference; ſhe even affected not to diſplay her charms to the utmoſt advantage, but rather to be ſhy and reſerved, * avoiding to be ſeen much in publick, and when ſhe did go abroad (as Tacitus obſerves) wore a veil that covered half her face; whether it was that this became her beſt, or that the beauty of what appeared might excite a deſire to ſee the reſt; but this reſtraint and affected modeſty, not being ſuitable either to her inclinations or her deſigns, ſhe ſoon threw off the maſk, and ſhewed herſelf in reality ſuch as ſhe was; receiving indifferently the incenſe of flattery from whatever quarter it came, and her houſe was open to all the world.

* Xiphilin. in Ner.

She had too many charms not to be ſurrounded with admirers. Rufus Criſpinus was one of the moſt aſſiduous †. She appeared ſo well ſatisfied with his addreſſes as to marry him. From this marriage proceeded the young Criſpinus, whom Nero afterwards put to death, for reaſons as unjuſt as ridiculous [a]. This marriage however, put no conſtrait upon Poppea, for Criſpinus who was exceſſively in love with her, and knowing that ſhe had never been uſed to be thwarted in any thing, was ſo fooliſh, and ſo convenient a huſband, as to indulge her ſo far as to ſuffer as many as pleaſed to have free acceſs to her, and offer up the ſame tribute of praiſe and homage that ſhe had been uſed to, from all the perſons of figure and diſtinction in Rome. A brilliant aſſembly met every day at her houſe, and ſhe was continually ſurrounded with crouds of flattering courties, who came to adore her beauty; it was the general rendezvous of play, diverſions, and pleaſures, and it was among theſe zealous votaries to her charms, that ſhe exerciſed that talent in which ſhe excelled, of entertaining her auditors with her bewitching converſation, and anſwering, with incomparable graces and affability, the delicate compliments that were made her by all that were preſent. But Criſpinus ſoon perceived that his complaiſance was carried a great deal too far, and was attended with very bad conſequences. He found by ſad experience, that thoſe

† Sueton. in Ner.

[a] This young lad, playing one day with other children of his age, diverted himſelf and his companions with counterfeiting a king. This was told Nero, who looking upon it as ominous, and that it foretold the empire to Criſpinus, became ſo cruelly jealous, that once, when they were amuſing themſelves with fiſhing, he ordered the poor boy to be thrown into the ſea.

thoſe marks of eſteem, which look ſo like friendſhip, are often the dangerous and enſnaring attacks of a lover; and that thoſe diverſions, thoſe parties of pleaſure which women are ſo fond of, and the familiarities they admit of in ſuch places, are generally the forerunners of their ruin, and the deſtruction of their virtue.

Of all thoſe that frequented Poppea's houſe, Otho ſeemed to be the moſt remarkable. This young man was deſcended from a very illuſtrious family, and extraordinary handſome. Beſides theſe advantages, he was the emperor's favourite and inſeparable companion, partner in all his follies and vices, privy to all his ſecrets, and obtained whatever he pleaſed to aſk; for it was through him, and by his intereſt, that all favours were conferred; ſo much, that thoſe who were happy enough to make Otho their friend, might look upon their buſineſs as done. Being therefore ſo powerful at court, it was no wonder that Poppea was extremely civil to him, and that he ſhould eaſily inſinuate himſelf into the good graces of a woman who had ſuch vaſt deſigns. He was continually † praiſing her beauty, and never viſited her without being loaded with preſents, nor went away without leaving behind him evident tokens of his prodigality, which with her, paſſed for generoſity and greatneſs of ſoul; ſo that by theſe exceſſive expences, accompanied by the moſt gallant and polite behaviour in the world, this cunning courtier ‡ ſo managed his affairs, that Poppea ſoon became ſenſible of his merit, and thought herſelf obliged to recompence his liberality.

There is nothing that more ſpeedily and effectually captivates the hearts of ſome women than preſents. It is the rock that their ſtrongeſt reſo-

† Tacit. Ann. 13. ‡ Plin. lib. 19. c. 3.

lutions ſplit againſt, and that virtue muſt be proof againſt every thing, that does not yield to the all conquering gold. A lover that is rich and liberal, is already in a very fair way of ſucceeding, and may be ſaid to be within view of his happineſs; whereas others with all their birth, wit, and merit, have many a weary ſtep to take before they make any conſiderable advances; ſo few Danaë's are there that are not to be won by the golden ſhower. Poppea, receiving ſo many preſents and favours from Otho, imagined herſelf not at liberty to be ſo ungrateful as to make no return. The great intereſt and credit of the courtier flattered the ambition of this haughty woman, and put a thouſand projects of grandeur into her head, which were vaſtly encreaſed by the promiſes he made her, ſo that her mind was ſufficiently ſtored with ideas of ſplendor and authority. She now thinks of nothing but Otho: Criſpinus is become inſupportable to her; ſhe hates him mortally, proves unfaithful to him, and gives herſelf up intirely to Otho.

This favourite, when he firſt began to make his addreſſes to Poppea, had ſomething more in his head than his own intereſts; * for it is reported thatNero had not been inſenſible of this lady's charms; but ſome remains of reſpect for his mother, who had already made a great noiſe about his amour with Actea, obliging him to proceed with caution, he gave it in charge to Otho his chief confident, to prepare her heart for him. But as it is the moſt difficult thing in the world, not to act a double part in theſe ſort of commiſſions, which put the fidelity of the agent ſo much to the teſt, ſo the favourite became terribly ſmitten with the charms of Criſpinus's wife; and whether he imagined that Nero was not very ſolicitous

* Plutar. Tacit. Hiſtor. 1.

licitous about this conqueſt, being then taken up with Actea, or that he was glad to ſecure Poppea to himſelf, or laſtly, that he believed it neceſſary to his fortune to get her into his power, that at a proper time he might, through her means promote his advancement, and preſerve his intereſt with Nero, by ſacraficing to him the charming Poppea; he married her however after Criſpinus's death, which happened very à propos.

And as he was prodigiouſly in love with her, he never ceaſed to boaſt of her extraordinary beauty; and eſpecially he affected before the emperor, to dwell much upon the regularity of her features, and the inexpreſſible gracefulneſs of all her actions; often declaring how happy he was, in poſſeſſing * the fineſt woman in the univerſe. His conſtant repetition of this, excited Nero's curioſity; and as he was not yet thoroughly acquainted with Poppea, he was very deſirous to be himſelf a judge of her merit, that he might ſee whether ſhe was deſerving of all the praiſes that had been ſo laviſhly beſtowed upon her. He ſaw her then, and finding that ſhe was even more beautiful than ſhe had been repreſented, he was immediately rather bewitched than in love with her.

Poppea, who carried her views much further than Otho imagined, like a ſkilful woman, took the advantage of her huſband's falſe meaſures. She preſently obſerved the impreſſion that her beauty had made upon the emperor, and not doubting but if ſhe could engage him, it would be the certains means of accompliſhing her vaſt deſigns. She reſolved to ſpare no pains to make this glorious conqueſt, or rather this unjuſt uſurpation. In order to this, ſhe ſet all her charms to work; tender and paſſionate looks, inſinuat-

* Tacit. Ann. 13. c. 46.

ing careſſes, and magnificent apparel; in ſhort, every thing that could poſſibly enſnare his heart was put in practice, and with great ſucceſs. For as ſhe had a peculiar art in captivating as many as ſhe had a mind to pleaſe, ſhe found it no difficult matter to draw into her net a prince, who was not of an age nor humour, to exerciſe the virtue of ſelf denial, nor did he heſitate a moment whether he ſhould gratify his inclinations or not. He attributed to real love, the falſe tokens of affection which were given him by this artful coquette, and became ſo violently enamoured, that he could no longer live without her.

Theſe aſſiduities alarmed Otho, whoſe paſſion had in a manner changed its nature as ſoon as he was Poppea's huſband, for he could not bear the thoughts of Nero's partaking with him in the poſſeſſion of her; on the contrary, he repented that he had ſo inadvertently procured himſelf a dangerous rival, that did not know what it was to be contradicted in his pleaſures. It is by no means ſafe to hold diſputes with one's maſter and emperor, againſt whom, one cannot even make uſe of one's advantages; for it leaves one no other choice than that of yielding, or bearing patiently all the conſequences. Whatever diſagreeableneſs there may be in doing one or the other, Otho was obliged, whether he would or not, to ſubmit to it; but not without ſuch a ſenſible affliction, as lay very heavy at his heart, and ſoon ſhewed itſelf in his countenance, which Poppea took notice of.

It is certain, that ſhe had a real eſteeem and affection for Otho, but the ſplendor of the throne afforded her more flattering and charming ideas than any other conſideration. Her ambition was the only maſter ſhe ſerved; it was not Nero that ſhe deſired, but could not help adoring his fortune;

tune; ſo that the endeavours ſhe made uſe of to triumph over his heart, were not on account of any love ſhe had to his perſon, but in order to promote her advancement, by making him purchaſe her favours at the price of the empire. But as ſhe was not ſure of meeting with this extraordinary ſucceſs, ſhe could not reſolve to part with Otho entirely, that ſhe might at leaſt ſecure one of her admirers. To bring this about, ſhe conducted herſelf with great cunning and policy, and affected to be very reſerved, knowing that by ſuch behaviour ſhe could not fail of pleaſing Otho, who was jealous, and at the ſame time of irritating Nero's deſires; for ſhe was not ignorant that diſguſt and indifference is very often the effect of a too eaſy conqueſt, ſome favours not being valuable, but in proportion to the difficulty with which they are obtained; that love often ends in the poſſeſſion of the object beloved, and that Nero, who was naturally very inconſtant, might poſſibly get ſoon rid of his paſſion, if he could gratify it upon too eaſy terms.

She managed her deſign with great addreſs for poſſeſſing, in an eminent degree, the talent of turning herſelf into every ſhape that ſuited her conveniency, ſhe began to put on the prude, and affected mightily to blame her paſt conduct. At firſt, ſhe induſtriouſly avoids being alone with Nero, or even holding any long converſations with him. A ſtrict modeſty, and a ſevere kind of circumſpection in her manners, ſucceeded that mirth and chearfulneſs ſhe had been hitherto remarkable for. She now makes long harangues upon prudence and diſcretion, which ſhe reſolves to practice in all her words and actions. In ſhort, ſhe ſhews upon every occaſion, ſo auſtere a regularity, that Nero going to make her a viſit one evening when Otho was abſent, ſhe denied herſelf

herſelf ſomewhat rudely, ſaying, that ſhe could not without being guilty of a crime, rob Octavia of her huſband's affections; * that ſhe had all the reaſon in the world to be faithful to Otho, who had every thing in him that was commendable, as well relating to his perſon as his inclinations †. That after all, ſhe was married to Otho, and would never give her huſband any reaſon to diſſolve a marriage that he had made, very valuable to her, by a moſt agreeable life, ſuch as Nero with all his ſovereign power could not exceed.

Poppea could not poſſibly act more for her purpoſe, and the ſnare was too well laid for Nero to eſcape. This falſe modeſty and reſervedneſs, inflamed the emperor's heart more than if ſhe had been never ſo liberal of her favours, but it had like to have been fatal to Otho; for Nero having taken it into his head, that Poppea's behaviour was all owing to the orders ſhe had received from her huſband, he was ſo enraged at it, that he did not threaten leſs, in the firſt heat of his anger, than to put him to death that had kindled it. He entirely withdrew all the affection he was uſed to have for him, deprived him of his confidence and familiarity, and would certainly have made him feel the utmoſt effects of his diſpleaſure, if it had not § been moderated by Seneca. This philoſopher, who was always uſing his beſt endeavours to calm the impetuoſity of his pupil's furious and ungovernable diſpoſition, by mild and gentle councils, was beſides, a good friend of Otho's. He repreſented to the emperor, (who had not yet thrown off all reſpect for his tutor) that a revenge like this could not chuſe but make a great noiſe in the world, and publiſh

* Plutar. in Galb. † Tacit. Ann. 13. § Plutar.

publiſh to every body the true reaſon of Otho's diſgrace, which was by means proper to be known. That there were other methods of getting rid of his rival, without having recourſe to thoſe violent remedies, ſince he had nothing to do but to ſend him from Rome, on ſome pretence, and then he might ſee Poppea as much as he pleaſed, without a competitor. Nero, who perhaps had not quite diveſted himſelf of all friendſhip for a man he had been ſo intimate with, and had opened himſelf to upon all occaſions without the leaſt reſerve, eſpecially in his moſt ſecret debaucheries; and to whom he had (in a manner) given the key of his heart, approved this expedient of his preceptor. He made Otho governor of Luſitania, and by ſo doing, procured to himſelf the ſatisfaction he ſo ardently wiſhed for, of ſeeing Poppea without a rival.

It may be aſſerted that Otho was himſelf the author of his misfortune; and that which he imagined would be a means of preſerving his fortune and intereſt, had like to have coſt him his life. He found himſelf obliged to quit Rome and Poppea, and ſet out for Luſitania full of ſorrow and jealouſy, plainly perceiving, that under the glorious title of governor, he was condemned to a rigorous baniſhment. So true it is, that there is no reckoning upon the friendſhip of great men, nor is there any ſolidity in their profeſſions of kindneſs; eſpecially when their favour is obtained by crimes and iniquity.

In the mean time Otho ſo managed his affairs that what he thought was his diſgrace, proved extremely to his advantage. He behaved * in his government with ſo much moderation and wiſdom, that all his paſt irregularities were forgot.

* Sueton. in Othon. Plutar. in Othon.

got. The bad impreſſions which his diſſolutions and debaucheries had made in every body's mind, were quite Obliterated, and his exactneſs, † integrity, and the regularity of his conduct, made people conceive ſo high an opinion of him, and ſo effectually gained him the hearts of all the world, eſpecially the army, that afterwards, they all declared for him, and advanced him to the empire.

Nero, being now delivered from his rival, omitted nothing that could re-inſtate him in his former happineſs, and regain the good graces of his miſtreſs; he exhauſted his whole ſtock of complaiſance and civility, and even condeſcended to make the moſt humble ſubmiſſions, which were the ſhameful marks of his defeat and ſlavery.

Beſides this, he loaded the haughty Poppea with rich and magnificent preſents, broke off all commerce with his once beloved Actea, of whom ſhe was jealous; and to carry his reſpect as far as it could go, he promiſed to marry her. This was juſt what ſhe aimed at; for being infinitely more in love with Nero's rank than his perſon, and her ambition being without limits, ſhe endeavoured at no leſs than to mount the throne; and there was nothing ſhe was not capable of doing, to gain this important point. Her charms were not the only engines ſhe ſet to work upon this occaſion, nor was it without deſign that ſhe entertained in her houſe ſoothſayers, and thoſe ſort of people who foretold events, ‖ whom ſhe conſulted and employed in her moſt ſecret affairs. But there were two great obſtacles in her way, that ſeemed to be an almoſt inſuperable check to her ſoaring hopes, and theſe were the authority of

† Tacit. Ann. 13. Hiſtor. 1. ‖ Tacit. Hiſtor. 1. c. 22.

of Agrippina, and Nero's marriage with Octavia; which, it muſt be owned, were ſuch as one would think could never be got over; but ambition is not eaſily repulſed. It is a paſſion that nothing puts a ſtop to, nothing diſcourages. There are no difficulties it is not ready to encounter. Its deſires encreaſe in proportion to its acquiſitions, and to gratify it is ſo far from ſatisfying, that it only ſerves to make it aſpire after new honours and dignities. So far from bearing a ſuperior, that it cannot endure an equal, for every thing that comes in competition with it, is expoſed to its fury and perſecution.

It is true that Poppea did not dip her hands in the blood of thoſe who gave her oppoſition, but ſhe was not leſs guilty of their deſtruction, becauſe in fact, ſhe was the occaſion of it *. After ſhe had made herſelf abſolute miſtreſs of the emperor's heart, ſhe forgot nothing that could contribute to the ruin of ſuch people as either by their employments, power, or intereſt, were in a capacity of obſtructing her ambitious ſchemes. Sometimes ſhe irritated the emperor againſt his mother, by inſpiring him with miſtruſts and ſuſpicions, by making him jealous and afraid of her authority, which, ſhe ſaid, Agrippina was endeavouring to make ſupreme and independent. At other times ſhe ſuggeſted that his mother had very bad deſigns againſt him, and that as ſhe had given him the empire, ſhe imagined ſhe had a right to deprive him of it if ſhe thought proper. She did not ſcruple to invent bitter things againſt Octavia, ſpreading falſe reports of her, and artfully inſinuating that ſhe was caballing againſt Nero, and debauching the people. When ſhe had fair opportunities ſhe would throw in a provoking † ſort of rallery, reproaching him, that inſtead

* Dio, lib. 61. † Tacit. Ann. 14.

ſtead of being emperor, he was more a ſubject than other people; that his ſubmiſſion could not be called reſpect or filial duty, but the dependance of a ſlave; that he was only looked upon as Agrippina's pupil, who kept him in ſubjection like a child. For in ſhort ſays ſhe, (with one of thoſe enchanting irreſiſtable looks, which ſhe knew ſo well how to put on, and at the ſame time letting fall ſome tears) "what reaſon can "you have for deferring any longer our marri-"age, if it be true that you are your own "maſter? Or what objection can any body have "againſt it, that ought to be of weight enough "to hinder you from accompliſhing your de-"ſires? Do they find any fault with my perſon? "Is my beauty ſurpaſſed by that of any other, "and does it not deſerve a ſuitable return of "love and tenderneſs on your ſide? Can any "body pretend that my birth does not entitle me "to the honour of being your wife, when it "is remembered that the higheſt dignities of the "republick have been ſeen in my family? Have "not my anceſtors been honoured with the ſame "glorions ornaments, wherein conſiſts the luſtre "and grandeur of the nobleſt houſes in Rome, "viz. the rods of the conſulſhip, and laurels of "the triumpher? [b] Can I not reckon in my fa-

"mily

[b] It has been already obſerved, that the conſuls were preceded by the lictors, or officers carrying bundles of rods, with a hatchet bound up in each of them, as a mark of their power and authority. Other magiſtrates were alſo allowed a certain number of lictors; and when ſeveral of different degrees of dignity happened to meet, the lictors of the inferior lowered his rods before the ſuperior. We ſhall have an opportunity of mentioning the ſeveral crowns which were granted to merit. Thoſe to whom the honour of a triumph

was

" mily, many generals who have deſerved the " empire, and whoſe extraordinary ſervices have " been judged worthy of great rewards? But " is it not rather that Agrippina is apprehenſive " that my advancement may be a check to her " pride and unlimited ambition; and that the " attachment to your intereſts, to which our " marriage would of courſe engage me, would " naturally oblige me to diſcover to you her " pernicious deſignes, and ſo publiſh to the ſen- " ate and the people, all her crimes, and her " inſatiable avarice? If your mother (continued " this artful woman) who is ſo accuſtomed to " rule you like an infant, cannot bear that I " ſhould live with you, reſtore me to my huſ- " band, give me back to Otho. I am ready to " go to him, were it to the furtheſt corner of " the world; and when I ſhall be at a diſtance " from the inevitable dangers to which I ſee you " expoſed, it will be leſs grievous to me to hear " ſpeak of the affronts given to my emperor, " than to be a ſad ſpectator of them."

Theſe ſharp and cunning remonſtrances made a great impreſſion on the emperor, and the more, becauſe Poppea was aſſiſted in her deſigns by thoſe who had acceſs to him; who ſeeing their authority weakened, or rather quite eclipſed by that of Agrippina, were very glad to make uſe of Poppea's intereſt in oppoſition to hers, but at the ſame time did not imagine that Nero would carry his fury and reſentment ſo far, as to put his mother to death; but ſuch is the deplorable weakneſs of thoſe who are poſſeſſed with the demon

was decreed, had a right to wear their crown in publick, which they never failed to do, as they wear glorious monuments of their valour, and of tha ſervices they had performed to the republick.

demon of irregular and unlawful amours: they are blinded by their tyrannical paſſion, and it becomes impoſſible for them to refuſe it any thing. They are forced to ſubſcribe raſhly, and without examining to every thing it exacts, not even ſparing thoſe that are neareſt to them, or having the leaſt regard to the laws of nature.

The haughty Poppea, after having brought the empreſs Agrippina to deſtruction, reſolved to do as much for Octavia, now the only perſon that hindered her marriage with Nero. As ſhe had amirable talents for gallantry, there was nothing capable of exciting deſire that ſhe did not put in practice to inflame the emperor, and ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, that Nero perfectly adored her, ſo that, not having it in his power to deny her any thing, he put away Octavia baniſhed her, and ſoon after married Poppea, with whom he was rather bewitched than enamoured.

The people, who are eaſily reconciled to whatever the ſovereign thinks proper to do, without giving themſelves much trouble about the juſtice of the matter, are very often by that means impoſed upon, and for want of conſideration become approvers of thoſe faults and vices which they would otherwiſe abhor. They therefore erected ſtatues in honour of the new empreſs, giving by this baſe piece of flattery, a ſhameful and unjuſt approbation to the ſcandalous marriage of Nero, and conſequently to the treatment poor Octavia had met with. Poppea finding herſelf at laſt exalted to the throne of the empire, which ſhe had ſo ardently wiſhed for, thought of nothing but enjoying her new dignity; but her triumph did not laſt longer than Octavia's diſgrace, for the ſcene ſoon changed for both of them. The people who are generally very fickle and inconſtant, had no ſooner made reflec-

tion

tion upon the unjuſt and injurious baniſhment of Octavia, and the cruel uſage this only remaining branch of Cæſars family had received, than they began to murmer, and loudly demanded that Claudius's daughter ſhould be recalled. All the town was in an uproar, nothing to be heard but complaints, which ſoon reached the ears of Nero; he fearing the caprice of the multitude, pretended to repent that he had ſent her away, and immediately recalled her.

The news of the empreſs's return was received with univerſal approbation. The whole town went out to meet her, and never was ſo much ſatisfaction ſeen in the countenance of the Romans, to the great vexation of Poppea, whoſe ſtatues they threw down with great marks of contempt, and at the ſame time carried Octavia's about the ſtreets in triumph. But theſe demonſtrations of love and affection, which the people with ſo much warmth gave this unfortunate princeſs, only haſtened her deſtruction; for Poppea, provoked to the higheſt degree, at being thus wounded in the moſt ſenſible part, and having her ſtatues trampled under foot, was inconſolable. She thought herſelf affronted in the cruelleſt manner, and drew conſequences from it that were not very favourable to her deſigns, for ſhe could not then doubt but the inclinations of the Romans were for Octavia; and concluding that ſhe could never be ſafe upon the throne as long as Octavia lived, for that Nero, being ſolicited by the ſupplications and complaints of the people, (whoſe hatred ſhe ſaw he was apprehenſive of) might at laſt open his eyes, as to the unjuſt manner in which he had treated his lawful wife, who had given him the empire, ſhe therefore reſolved to looſe no time, but to ſacrifice Octavia as ſoon as poſſible, to her own peace and ſafety.

In

In order to perſuade Nero to this, ſhe thought it neceſſary to call in to her aſſiſtance the utmoſt efforts of her charms, and employ the moſt delicate ſtrokes of her policy. She very dexteroufly blended the emperor's intereſts with her own; ſhe exaggerated the power of Octavia, her credit with the people, her bad deſigns; and to make Nero more ſuſceptible of the impreſſions ſhe had a mind to give him, ſhe inſinuated, that this importunity of the people in favour of Octavia, amounted to no leſs than a downright revolt againſt his authority. She then (adding the moſt enchanting look ſhe could poſſibly put on, to the irreſiſtable charms of her all perſwading voice) threw herſelf at his feet with her face bathed in tears; and in this poſture, which even gave her an additional beauty, ſhe told him, "that however deſirous ſhe was to render indiſ-"ſoluble the bands of a marriage, which would "make her his inſeparable companion, and con-"ſequently procure her the greateſt honour ſhe "could poſſibly aſpire to, yet it was not her in-"tention to make him any ſuch requeſt. No "(continued ſhe) that is not the favour I am to "aſk; I come to put my life under your pro-"tection. The ſeditious partiſans of Octavia, "ſheltering themſelves under the ſpecious name "of the people, undertake in time of peace "what they durſt not attempt during the war; "for if you conſider the affair, you will find "that when they lately took up arms, it was a-"gainſt you that they did ſo. They ſeem to "want nothing but a leader, which Octavia will "find without giving herſelf much trouble. In "ſhort, * ſince by all appearance, my life is "what they aim at, I would take the liberty to "aſk what I have done to forfeit it, what crime

"or

* Tacit. Ann. 14.

" or miſchief have I committed; whom have I " had the misfortune to injure or diſpleaſe; is it " becauſe I may probably give lawful heirs to " the empire, that the people are ſo exaſperated " againſt me; or does Rome chuſe rather to ſee " upon the throne, the infamous poſterity of a " miſerable player on the flute? (meaning Eucer) " to whom (by a horrible calumny) Nero gave " out that Octavia had proſtituted herſelf.

" Your intereſts however (added ſhe with great " art and ſubtilty) ſhall always be infinitely " dearer to me than my own. If it be true that " I have done harm to any body, or if you are " determined to have the people for your maſter, " do not wait till you are compelled, to re-call " Octavia; do it with a good grace and not " by compulſion. Let it not be at the inſtiga- " tion, or rather command of a brutal and " inſolent mob. The publick benefit and yours, " ought in all reaſon to take place of my par- " ticular advantage. Give me up then to the " good of the ſtate, or rather to the unreaſon- " able hatred of the people. Let me die a mar- " tyr to the perſecutions of Agrippina, and the " jealouſy of Octavia; or if you pleaſe, call it " the intereſts of the republick; I am ready to " ſubmit to your good pleaſure in all things. But " if you have not a mind that a confuſed multi- " tude, a mutinous rabble ſhould preſcribe laws " to you, if you can reſolve to ſhew that you " are emperor, and have yet ſome ſmall kindneſs " for Poppea, put her life in ſafety by puniſhing " thoſe who threaten it. Nothing will be eaſier " to you than to prevent the like ſeditions for " the future; for ſince Octavia is the only cauſe " of them, you have only to take from the peo- " ple all hope of ſeeing her again at Rome as

" empreſs,

"empreſs, and ſome other ſuitable huſband may "eaſily be procured for her."

Never was ſlander ſet out in more plauſible colours, nor impoſture invented with more ſpecious marks of probability. Nero gave into it at once; he liſtned very attentively to this ſtudied diſcourſe of Poppea, which ſhe pronounced with ſuch artifice, that the emperor did not in the leaſt doubt the truth of what ſhe ſaid. He was alarmed at this pretended cabal of Octavia, and was afraid of that poor princeſs, weak and defenceleſs as ſhe was; for Poppea knew ſo well how to ſupport her aſſertion, by making the danger appear certain and imminent, that Nero, believing his life was at ſtake if Octavia was ſuffered any longer to enjoy hers, had her cruelly put to death; for after having dipped his hands in his mother's blood, the greateſt crimes coſt him but little trouble, nor did he ſcruple to become the murderer of his innocent wife. Poppea finding her jealouſy appeaſed, her power eſtabliſhed, and her marriage ſecured, would no longer deny herſelf the pleaſure of being revenged of thoſe who had oppoſed her deſigns, and of heaping favours upon ſuch as had been her friends.

Doriphorus, great maſter of the houſhold, forfeited his life for the liberty he had taken of diſapproving of the emperor's paſſion for Poppea; and on the contrary Geſſius Florus, † for being huſband to Cleopatra; Poppea's intimate friend, was made governor of Judea; Nero being unable to refuſe her any thing, nor could he prevail upon himſelf to run the riſque of diſobliging her whom he rather adored than loved.

He admired her beauty as much as ſhe valued it herſelf, and never omitted an opportunity of extolling

† Joſeph. Antiq. Jud. lib. 20.

extolling it, which he did by the moſt delicate and ſtudied praiſes. He went ſo far as to compoſe * verſes upon the charming luſtre of her hair, which he compared to amber.

It is certain, that Poppea was an accompliſhed beauty; but it muſt alſo be confeſſed, that never any body took more care to preſerve their charms; for in order to keep and heighten thoſe graces that had ** procured her ſo many admirers, ſhe ſpared neither coſt nor pains. Beſides prodigious ſums, which ſhe laid out in the compoſition of the moſt coſtly waſhes and pomatums for her complexion, ſhe † cauſed to be maintained with vaſt care and expence, five hundred ſhe aſſes that had juſt had young, which were milked every day to make ‡ a bath for her; having been informed that nothing was comparable to it for preſerving the ſkin and keeping it from wrinkles, thoſe cruel effects of age; and whenever ſhe travelled § ſhe was attended by this ridiculous equipage.

Great variety of the fineſt apparel and moſt precious jewels, wonderfully encreaſed her natural beauty. She every day appeared in the moſt magnificent cloaths; her furniture was ſumptuous, and her equipage the moſt brilliant that could be imagined. The mules that carried her litter were adorned with the moſt coſtly harneſs, and were ſhod with ſolid gold inſtead of iron; the traces and reins were all wrought with gold thread ‖ and wire, and ſhe never appeared in publick without all theſe tokens of her unbounded pride and vanity. Never was there ſeen ſuch prodigious luxury. As ſhe had nothing ſo much at

* Plin. Hiſt. nat. lib. 17. cap. 3. ** Plin. lib. 11. c. 41. lib. 28. cap. 12. † Juvenal. Sat. 6. ‡ Plin. lib. 38. c. 11. Juvenal. Sat. 6. § Xiphiliin in Ner. ‖ Plin. lib. 33. c. 11.

at heart as the deſire of pleaſing, ſhe had that perpetually in view in all her actions. She had recourſe to her looking-glaſs every moment, in order to ſtudy her looks and geſtures, and one day this haughty empreſs, not thinking herſelf ſo handſome as uſual, and foreſeeing with grief of heart, the ſad but inevitable decline of her charms, which the fatal laws of time would not ſpare, ſhe wept bitterly, and prayed the gods that ſhe might die before ſhe grew old.

Tho' ſhe applied her beauty to very bad purpoſes, ſhe affected to be very modeſt, and had an outſide appearance that deceived people. It was without doubt, this exterior ſhew of virtue that induced Joſephus to run out into the praiſes of this empreſs; or elſe we muſt ſuppoſe that it was in conſideration of the particular obligations that illuſtrious Jew had to Poppea, who often honoured him with her protection upon occaſions when he had the moſt powerful courtiers, and even kings to oppoſe. This appeared in the buſineſs of Felix.

Felix was brother to Pallas, remarkable for his credit and power in Claudius's reign, (whom he governed as he pleaſed) and for his immenſe riches, which were the fruits of all the extortions he had been guilty of, and which at laſt haſtened his death. Felix was ſent in quality of governor to Judea, where, being ſupported by his brother's intereſt at court, he exerciſed his authority with that haughtineſs * and brutal pride which is ſo natural to thoſe, who from a low condition, have been exalted to honours and great employments. Among a number of arbitrary things which he did, in order to give a high opinion of his power, he cauſed ſome of the jewiſh prieſts

* Tacit. Ann. 12. † Baron. ad An. Ner. 2. acta 32.

prieſts to be apprehended, upon a very ſlight pretence, loaded with chains, and ſent to Rome to be tried. Baronius is of opinion, that theſe were the people who had made a vow not to eat or drink till they killed St. Paul.

King Agrippa, whoſe father was ſo powerful at Rome, happening to be intereſted in this affair, ſolicited it ſo ſtrongly and ſucceſsfully at court, in conjunction with Fœlix, that the priſoners were put into cloſe confinement, and treated cruelly at Rome, without any body's being at the trouble of examining whether they were blameable or not. Joſephus, who was their friend, and knowing their innocence, reſolved to go and defend their cauſe. He embarked * for that purpoſe, and upon his journey happened to meet with Aliturius a Jew, and a comedian, mightily eſteemed by Nero, (who was very fond of that ſort of people, and uſed to appear upon the ſtage among them) and alſo by Poppea. It was no difficult matter for Joſephus, being a perſon of great diſtinction and conſideration among the Jews, to make this man his friend, who was rejoiced at having an opportunity of doing a piece of ſervice to his countryman, and a perſon of Joſephus's merit. They travelled together, and were no ſooner arrived at Rome, than Aliturius made what haſte he could to recommend as warmly as poſſible, Joſephus's cauſe to the emperor and empreſs, to whom he likewiſe preſented Joſephus afterwards. This illuſtrious Jew told his ſtory ſo gracefully, and with ſo much good ſenſe, that Nero and Poppea were charmed with him; the latter eſpecially was ſo glad to oblige Joſephus, that ſhe undertook his buſineſs herſelf, and interceded for the priſoners with the emperor.—— So powerful a recommendation

* Joſeph. in vita ſua.

could not fail of being victorious; the priſoners were immediately acquitted and ſet at liberty, in ſpight of all the intrigues of the king of Judea and Fœlix; and Joſephus, beſides the gaining of his cauſe, received from Poppea ſuch magnificent preſents as were worthy of his merit, and the high rank of his benefactreſs.

Poppea looked upon her exaltation to the throne, as the greateſt happineſs that could poſſibly befal her, becauſe ſhe did not know the value of that which was offered her by Heaven, viz. The knowledge of the true religion that St. Paul would have inſtructed her in, and perſuaded her to embrace.

St Paul, * the firſt time he reſided at Rome, had contracted ſome acquaintance in Nero's court; it is even confidently affirmed, that he kept a correſpondence by letters with Seneca, tho' many authors are of opinion that thoſe letters are fictitious, being unworthy of St. Paul and Seneca †, and the work of the ſame impoſtor; but it is generally agreed that Seneca muſt have known St. Paul ‡, whoſe reputation and doctrine, being very extraordinary, made a great noiſe, and were much talked of. Be that as it will, it is certain that St. Paul was well known to many of Nero's officers, ſince he ſays himſelf, that ‖ his bonds are become famous in the emperor's court [c].

In

* S. Chryſoſt. advers. Vituper. vitæ Monaſt.
† Godeus. Hiſt. Eccles. ‡ Baron. ad. Ann. Ner. 12. S. Chryſoſt. in Act. hom 54. ‖ Ad Philip. 1. 13.

[c] It cannot be denied that St. Paul had acquaintance in Nero's family. I would have you to know, ſays he himſelf to the Philippians that what has happened to me far from doing harm, has much contributed to the

In all likelyhood it was by means of the friends St. Paul had in the emperor's palace that he found opportunities of ſpeaking to Poppea. He repreſented to her, with a generous freedom, the diſorders of her paſt life; and finding her well enough diſpoſed to hear him, he explained to her the myſteries of the chriſtian religion, and exhorted her to embrace its maxims, and practice its rules. Theſe remonſtrances being made, with that true apoſtolical zeal which St. Paul was ſo remarkable for, operated very powerfully upon the empreſs, which Nero perceived. It was touching him in the moſt tender part, to inſpire Poppea with ſuch ſentiments as he could not approve of. He was informed that it was St. Paul who had given her the auſtere leſſons, which had made her ſo diſcret and modeſt; and in the firſt tranſports of his rage he had him apprehended, loaded with irons, and ſhut up in a cloſe priſon, after having abuſed him with all the opprobrious

the advancement of the goſpel, for my bonds are much ſpoke of in the emperor's palace, and among all the Romans. It is even certain, that this apoſtle had converted to chriſtianity many officers of Cæſar's houſhold; for towards the end of the ſame epiſtle, he ſays to the Philippians; all the ſaints ſalute you, eſpecially thoſe of Cæſar's houſhold. This has induced St. Jerome to aſſert, that St Paul contrived to form a church in the very palace of the emperor, his perſecutor. The forementioned father goes further ſtill, for he will have it that Seneca turned chriſtian, and correſponded with St. Paul; he even places him in the rank of ſaints and eccleſiaſtical authors. It is true, that there are but few people who do not deny the veracity of thoſe letters, but on the other hand it is generally taken for granted, that St. Paul muſt have been perſonally acquainted with Seneca, his doctrine and impriſonment being ſo much talked of at Rome.

names he could think of, and treated him as a knave, corrupter, and vagabond [d].

St. Peter and St. Paul were confined together, and were afterwards companions in their martyrdom. They were ſhut up in a frightful dungeon, but their guards were not able to reſiſt the words of life that flowed from their mouths, ſo that being fully convinced of the truth of that holy religion which the apoſtles taught, theſe jaylers were immediately baptized, and a few days after, being accuſed and convicted of being chriſtians * they ſuffered, with wonderful intrepidity, a glorious martyrdom for the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, which they embraced.

The narrow limits of St. Paul's priſon bore no proportion to his zeal. This good † apoſtle having made his guards his friends, found means by his emiſſaries, to exhort the empreſs Poppea to yield to the force of truth, and profeſs that faith which he had preached to her, but his endeavours were without ſucceſs; for as the ſteps ſhe had taken towards virtue by his advice, were only ſome weak efforts, her vicious habits ſoon reaſſumed

* Martyrol. Rom. 2. Jull. † S. Chryſoſt. advers. Vit. Monaſt.

[d] This place is now called San Pietro in Carcere. It was formerly named Carcer Tullianus. There were two priſons, one upon the other, and thoſe criminals that were moſt guilty, were ſhut up in the lowermoſt, which was called Robur [O dignum carcere & robore] ſays Cicero. Theſe priſons were horrible on account of their darkneſs, and the intolerable ſtench with which they were infected. Salluſt thus deſcribes them. Eſt locus in carcere quod Tullianum appellatur ubi paululum aſcenderis ad levam, circiter duodecim pedes humi depreſſus. Eum muniunt udique parietes, atque inſuper camera lapideis fornicibusjuncta ſed inculta tenebris, odore fædo, atque terribili ejus facies eſt.

aſſumed their former ſtrength, in ſpight of the ſalutary doctrine of the apoſtle, which Nero took care to put a ſtop to, and prevent its having the deſigned effect; for being told that even from the dungeon the apoſtle did not ſlacken his endeavours, nor ceaſe to inſtruct the empreſs, but that he was continually preſſing her to conform herſelf to the maxims of a religion, the ſanctity of which did by no means ſuit with his inclinations, he had him behead without the town, and the ſame day St. Peter was crucified by his order.

Poppea returned to her former abominations. Still intoxicated with her beauty and her power, ſhe applied herſelf more and more to the preſervation of the one, by the charms of the other; and the emperor, who loved her as much as ever, finding her in every reſpect the ſame ſhe was before, ſet no bounds to his complaiſance. But what inflamed him yet more was, the hopes he had of her bringing him an heir to the empire, for to his exceſſive joy, the empreſs was with child. He demonſtrated his ſatisfaction by all the ways he could invent to think of, and among the reſt, plenty of vows to the gods, for a happy delivery, were not forgot.

The ſenate, the people, and all the orders of the town were too good courtiers to be backward in paying their reſpects, and ſhewing how much they partook in the good fortune of the emperor. She was brought to bed at Antium of a girl, which was named Claudia, and was immediately honoured with the title of auguſt, as well as her mother. Nero, ſeeing his wiſhes occompliſhed, indulged himſelf in an exceſs of joy *. He cauſed the moſt ſumptuous and magnificent games to be exhibited, according to the Athenian ceremonies. He dedicated a temple to

* Plin. Tacit. Sueton.

the goddeſs of Fecundity, in gratitude for the fertility of Poppea; and that nothing might be wanting to do honour to the princeſs's birth, he cauſed games and ſhows to be repreſented in a theatre beyond the Tiber, where was aſſembled an innumerable multitude of people, to hear the ſongs and hymns that were compoſed on this occaſion, in honour of young Claudia; and the emperor himſelf would needs perform a part among the muſicians.

The obſequious ſenate went in a body to Antium in great ceremony, to congratulate the empreſs upon her happy delivery; all the orders did the ſame, and ſtrove to out do each other in reſpect and civility.

But this joy was ſoon turned into mourning; Claudia lived but a few months; and as Nero did not at the time of her birth, know how to contain his ſatisfaction within reaſonable bounds, ſo on the other hand, his grief at her death was no leſs immoderate. This accident was matter of freſh trouble to the ſenate, who being obliged to regulate their ſentiments and conduct according to thoſe of the emperor, were now to expreſs as much affliction as they did joy before. They propoſed to immortalize the young princeſs, build temples in honour of her, and appoint prieſts to officiate daily. In ſhort, they carried their flattery and ſubmiſſion to the utmoſt degree of impiety. Poppea's affliction was more ſenſible, and more juſt; for, if nature had been ſilent upon this occaſion, her intereſts required that ſhe ſhould ſincerely lament the death of this child; becauſe, by its birth, Nero's uſual fickleneſs of temper ſeemed to be much changed for the better. Beſides, her having a child had much won her the hearts of the Romans in general, which had been much alienated from her by the murder

murder of Octavia. The empreſs however proved with child again, which renewed her hopes, and in all probability would have crowned her deſires as well as thoſe of the empire, if Nero had ſuffered her to go her time out.

This prince had long ſince ſhut his ears againſt the wiſe remonſtrances of good people, and had given himſelf up entirely to the pernicious flattery of mercenary courtiers, who laboured for their own advantage, and not for the emperor's honour or intereſt, who amuſed himſelf with ſuch things as were quite below his dignity, and thought of nothing but his dancing, plays, and muſick, in all which he affected to excel the reſt of mankind. But his greateſt ambition was to drive a chariot; this piece of folly he carried ſo far, that he left Rome, and took a long journey into Greece, on purpoſe to ſhew his ſkill and addreſs, as we ſhall ſee preſently.

Poppea, not being able to endure that the emperor ſhould thus leſſen himſelf, and employ all his time in ſuch low exerciſes, which expoſed him to the laughter and ridicule of the world, endeavoured to reclaim him, by condemning thoſe vile and mean occupations, which brought an indelible ſtain upon his glory and the imperial dignity. To this purpoſe ſhe employed her prayers, careſſes and tears, but all in vain. She next had recourſe to reproaches and raillery, but this method, inſtead of producing a good effect, proved fatal to the empreſs. For this unnatural prince, not being able to bear ſome provoking words that Poppea gave him one day for driving a chariot, he gave her ſuch a kick * on the belly that ſhe died immediately.

When the emperor had recovered from the tranſport of fury he had been in, he was incon-

* Tacit. Ann. 16. Sueton. in Ner. Xiphilin.

ſolable. He cauſed all imaginable honours to be paid to her body, which was embalmed after the manner of the ancient kings. It was carried with great pomp and magnificence to the mauſoleum that was erected for the Julian family; and if Pliny is to be credited, more perfumes were conſumed in her funeral pile, than Arabia produces in a year *. In ſhort, as if the emperor had a mind to make her amends for the life that he had deprived her of, he made her a goddeſs, and cauſed divine honours to be paid her. Her funeral panegyrick was pronounced with great form and ceremony, in which her tranſcendent beauty was not forgot. Nero ſeemed more in love with her after her death than before, if poſſible; his paſſion was then as infamous, as violent in her life time; and the laws of modeſty will not permit us to relate, what hiſtory † affirms, that this libidinous prince cauſed to be made upon the body of his freedman Sporus, whoſe face had ſome reſemblance with that of Poppea.

* Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. 12. c. 18. † Aurel. Victor. Epitom. Sueton. in Ner. Xiphilin.

MESSALINA.

MESSALINA,

Third Wife of NERO.

NONE of the emperor's reigns could be compared to Nero's for the firſt five years, which merited the praiſes of all hiſtorians, inſomuch that Trajan, who was himſelf ſo great a prince, affirms, that the beginning of Nero's reign might ſerve as a model for all kings to copy after *. The manner in which he intended to govern, and the rules he laid down to conduct himſelf by, were ſo agreeable to the ſenate and all the people, and gave them ſo high an idea of the happineſs of this reign, that they were ordered to be engraven on a table of ſilver: Auguſtus was the patern he was to copy after; and to ſhew that he intended to be an exact imitator of that excellent prince, he obliged himſelf † to do ſome action of generoſity, clemency, or liberality every day. Perſons that were in affliction might depend upon finding a ſure refuge in him. He eaſed the people by the ſuppreſſion of new taxes, and by a diminution of the old ones. He ſupported indigent virtue and nobility, (made contemptible through poverty) by delivering from miſery and wretchedneſs, ſuch ſenators of illuſtrious birth, as by the viciſſitudes of fortune, were become extremely poor; and by his liberality, put them in a condition of maintaining their dignity with honour and credit. In ſhort, he made ſuch neceſſary and profitable regulations, that the ſenate, being charmed with ſo glorious a proſpect, returned him publick thanks in great form; but Nero, with imitable

* Aurel. Victor. Epitom. in Ner. † Sueton. in Ner. c. 12.

grace and modeſty, ſaid he had not yet been ſo happy as to deſerve them.

Such a gracious and commendable beginning ſhould (one would imagine) be attended with glorious conſequences, as it ſeemed the certain forerunner of a happy reign. Each perſon flattered himſelf with the hopes of enjoying an uninterrupted good fortune, and Nero was generally looked upon as the moſt valuable preſent of the gods, ſent to re-eſtabliſh the publick felicity, and renew the Auguſtine age. But this emperor did not long anſwer the great expectations that all the world had conceived of him. His manners changed along with his fortune, and he diveſted himſelf of his good qualities, in proportion to the encouragement he gave to flatterers; becoming wicked with them, by contagion. He ſuffered himſelf to be hurried on by a bad example, and at laſt giving himſelf up to all manner of crimes, he clearly proved that, from Ænobarbus and Agrippina, nothing could proceed but what was pernicious and deteſtable.

After having ſhook off the intolerable yoke of his mother's authority, and that of his preceptors, which laid him under a grevious reſtraint, all thoſe ſhameful vices, which rendered him the ſcourge of Rome and the republick, broke out like a torrent. Inſtead of Auguſtus, who at firſt he declared ſhould be his model, Caligula, the worſt of all the emperors, was the perſon he ſaid he was reſolved to imitate; he kept his word, for he ſurpaſſed him in all ſorts of wickedneſs to that degree, that his name, which before furniſhed an idea of a moſt accompliſhed prince, fell afterwards into ſuch hatred and publick execration, that it became the expreſſion and image of a deteſtable tyrant; ſo that whoever

ever was afterwards to be branded with that infamous character, was called a Nero.

His monſtrous lewdneſs defiled every part of his body. He invented ſuch brutal pleaſures as were never thought of before, and there was neither * condition, relationſhip, nor ſex, that could be ſecure from the infamous and abominable flames of his incontinence. His horrible cruelties over flowed Rome with blood and tears. He put † his aunt Domitia to death, to poſſeſs himſelf of her eſtate; tho' this lady was ſo extreme old, that if he had had but a little patience it muſt have fallen to him of courſe. Rubellius Plautus, his near relation, was afterwards ſacrificed to his jealouſy, tho' he had retired into Aſia, that he might give no offence to Nero; but this voluntary baniſhment did not protect him, for the barbarous emperor ſent people thither on purpoſe to aſſaſſinate him, with orders to bring his head to Rome. He indulged himſelf in the baſe, and poor ſatisfaction of examining it, and adding inſult to cruelty, he ſaid, in a jocoſe way, that he did not think Rubellius had ſo large a noſe. Pallas was alſo the object of his cruelty and avarice; for Nero had him poiſoned, in order to ſeize the immenſe riches of this freedman, who had almoſt inſolently abuſed his good fortune, and accumulated prodigious wealth by rapine, and oppreſſion, which he forfeited by an untimely end: A juſt reward of the many people he had put to death, in order to glut himſelf with their ſpoils. After having made the citizens of Rome ſufficiently ſenſible of his inhumanity, he exerciſed his fury againſt Rome itſelf, in ruining its magnificent buildings, temples, and palaces ‡, by

* S. Chryſoſt. advers. Vituper. vitæ Monaſt. † Sueton. in Nerc. Tacit. ‡ Dio. Tacit. Sueton.

by ſetting the town on fire, which he beheld with great pleaſure from the top of a tower, and ſaw it, with raging violence and impetuoſity, preying upon the moſt ſumptuous edifices in the nobleſt ſtreets in Rome; which he ſaid gave him an agreeable notion of the burning of Troy. Nothing could better paint his character than his burning Rome *, on purpoſe to gratify his diabolical curioſity, and that he might alſo be thereby furniſhed with an opportunity of indulging the implacable hatred he bore to the chriſtians, whom he accuſed of this horrible action, and ſo threw the blame upon them, puniſhing thoſe poor innocent people for a crime that no body was capable of but himſelf. Happy cruelty for them, who were thereby delivered out of a world that was not worthy of them, and put in poſſeſſion of the glorious crown of martyrdom.

To attempt to give a particular detail of all the crimes this infamous prince was guilty of, would be an endleſs taſk. It is ſufficient for our purpoſe, to ſay, that after having ſhed the blood of Britannicus, his mother, and his wife Octavia, in order to marry Poppea, whom he alſo killed as has been related, he ſoon after, reſolved to marry again, and at firſt had thoughts of Antonia his firſt wife's ſiſter, and his own ſiſter by adoption. But Antonia was not ſo charmed with the dazzling pomp and magnificence of a throne, (however captivating it may ſeem to vulgar eyes) as to accept of his propoſal; for ſhe was very ſenſible, that notwithſtanding its ſplendid outſide, which makes it ſo ardently deſired by ambitious people, it generally produces innumerable troubles and vexations; and that this exalted poſt, ſo much coveted, is ſurrounded with dangerous precipices. Theſe judicious reflections induced her to refuſe the

* Baron.

the offer of Nero, whoſe brutal temper ſhe could not but be very well acquainted with.

It cannot be denied, but that Antonia's conduct upon this occaſion was the height of prudence. The misfortunes of Octavia and Poppea were terrible examples for her, and as ſhe had a right way of judging in all things, ſhe looked upon the treatment thoſe two empreſſes had met with, to be no other than what ſhe might herſelf expect; for which reaſon, ſhe ſteadily perſiſted in her determination, never to marry a prince with whom ſhe could not be an hour in ſafety. This refuſal coſt her her life, for Nero, whoſe impetious deſires would admit of no contradiction, accuſed her of having bad deſigns againſt the empire, and upon this accuſation (which was ſupported by no ſort of proof,) put her to death.

He then pitched upon Meſſalina, grand daughter of * Statillius Taurus, who in Auguſtus's time, had been honoured with a triumph and the conſulſhip.

This lady made a great noiſe in Rome on account of her great riches and her wit; and tho' ſhe had had already three huſbands, from whom ſhe was ſeperated by deaths or divorces, ſhe was yet very beautiful. Theſe good qualities procured her abundance of admirers, and in ſpight of certain ſuſpicions about her virtue, ſhe made ſhift to provide herſelf with a fourth huſband.

This was Atticus Veſtinus, Nero's companion in all his debaucheries, and privy to all his ſecrets. This ſenator had the ſkill to introduce himſelf ſo far into the emperor's good graces, and to acquire ſuch a degree of familiarity with him, that he frequently took the liberty to pique him by the moſt cutting railleries. Nero did not ſuffer it

* Sueton. in Ner. Tacit. Ann.

it without a good deal of impatience, but as he had truſted Veſtinus with all his affairs, and had entirely opened his heart to him, he dare not reprimand him, for fear he ſhould reveal the ſhameful ſecrets he had been made acquainted with. Veſtinus, however, when he married Meſſalina, was not ignorant that Nero had been very free with that lady. Their galantry was ſo much talked of at Rome, that it is not at all probable Veſtinus ſhould be the only perſon that knew nothing of it, for ſhe regarded her reputation ſo little in that affair, that ſhe made no manner of ſecret of it, nor did ſhe think proper to carry her ſcruples ſo far as to put her honour in competition with her fortune; ſo ſhe laid herſelf out to engage him as much as poſſible, being ſenſible that this amour could not but furniſh her with the means of gratifying her vanity to the utmoſt. But as ſhe had but ſmall hopes of ſucceeding in all her ambitious ſchemes, ſhe prevailed upon herſelf to take up with Veſtinus for her fourth huſband, who paid very dear for the honour of marrying the emperor's miſtreſs, for Nero reſented it ſo much, that he waited only for a fair opportunity to deſtroy him.

This he thought offered itſelf very apropos in the conſpiracy of poiſon which was fatal to ſo many honeſt men. But as there was not the leaſt ſhadow of proof that Veſtinus had had any hand in that plot, ſo no body could be found willing to accuſe him. Nero being at laſt quite weary of ſeeing a man live whom he hated mortally, (eſpecially ſince he was now at liberty by Poppea's death to marry Meſſalina) he ordered his veins to be opened, without ſeeking for any further pretence; and by that means got rid of an object, that from being the greateſt favourite, was become extreamly odious to him. Veſtinus was

at

at table in his own houſe, entertaining a great number of his friends at ſupper, when the inſtruments of Nero's cruelty came thither to put him to death. They forced him into a warm bath, and opened his veins ſo that he bled to death.

This tragical event did not coſt Meſſalina many tears, as ſhe was ſure that Nero would ſoon make her amends for her loſs. He did ſo in effect, for he married her, and cauſed her to be honoured with the glorious title of auguſt. This new empreſs found at firſt great charms * in the brilliant luſtre of the throne, but ſoon after perceived it to be full of cares and anxieties. Nero's irregular conduct was an inexhauſtible fountain of bitterneſs, which Meſſalina was the more ſenſible of, as ſhe was forced to lament in ſecret, and without complaining for fear that her remonſtrances, if ſhe ſhould venture to make any, might prove as fatal to her as they were to Poppea, whoſe place ſhe filled; for Nero was no longer capable of following wholeſome advice, being entirely guided by his extravagant deſires and caprices.

The emperor, not being ſatisfied with the crimes he had already committed, added freſh murders to thoſe he was ſtained with before, and under pretence of puniſhing ſuch as had been engaged in Piſo's conſpiracy, he filled Rome with blood. Silanus Vetus, and all his family were the objects of his rage. Anceus Mella, Seneca's brother, and father of the poet Lucan periſhed under his accuſation, as well as Petronius, the moſt agreeable debauchee of his time. Pætus Traſea the ſenator, famous for his great employments and dignities, in which he acquitted himſelf with honour. Borea Soranus, illuſtrious for his nobility and high ſtation, as well as

* Goltz. Theſaur. Rei. Antiq.

as for his firm and immoveable probity, precious remains of ancient Roman virtue; Corbulon, in whom was alſo to be ſeen a true image of old Rome, being the firmeſt ſupport of the empire; Seneca, and an infinite number of others of the firſt claſs, augmented the number of victims that this tyrant ſacrificed to his cruelty.

Meſſalina had many other reaſons for the trouble and vexation ſhe underwent from the conduct of Nero; his follies and extravagancies continually prepared for her new matter of ſorrow and diſcontent. His having paſſed his youth in ſinging, driving chariots, and muſick, might be excuſed; but even when he became emperor, nothing would ſerve him but diſplaying his abilities in ſuch low exerciſes as were not at all ſuitable to his dignity, and this upon ſuch occaſions, as moſt required that he ſhould put on a gravity conformable to his rank; for example, before Tiridates, who was come to Rome on purpoſe to receive from the hands of the emperor the crown of Armenia: For Nero, being unable to reſtrain himſelf for any conſiderable time, as ſoon as the ceremony of the coronation was over, carried this king to the theatre, and in his preſence, having cloathed himſelf in green, he would needs ſhew his ſkill in driving a chariot, not being at all aſhamed to degrade himſelf by thoſe mean occupations. But how unworthy ſo ever they were of an emperor, there was no want of Sycophants and flatterers, who extol even the vices and greateſt faults of princes, and who mightily commended his great addreſs and activity; Nero, being then perſwaded that it was a pity to ſhut up within Rome ſuch rare talents, reſolved to give proofs of them in foreign countries, in order to obtain the crowns that were given to the beſt performer in driving chariots,

acting

acting plays, the beſt ſinger and the beſt player on the harp for this was his greateſt ambition. He could not bear that any one ſhould diſpute theſe glorious titles with him, and it would have been very dangerous to become his rival. He quitted Rome then, and ſtopped in all the towns upon the road. He there made himſelf a publick ſhow to the people in all the ſquares and theatres, and moſt ridicuouſly ſet forth before all the world, that great ſkill and addreſs he ſo much valued himſelf upon, ſupplicating the approbation of all the ſpectators; and, after having gone through all Achaia, he returned to Rome, loaded with one thouſand eight hundred crowns [b], which he was

[b] The Romans honoured with a crown, thoſe who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in war, fighting in the capitol, publick ſports, any particular ſcience, or even combats in the amphitheatre. As theſe crowns were gixen upon different occaſions, they were made of different materials. There were ten ſorts of them. The firſt and moſt honourable, was of that common herb which the latins call gramen, which is our dogs tooth.

The ſecond was of oak, which was conſecrated to Jupiter; thoſe who won the prizes in the combats of the capitol, were diſtinguiſhed by them.

The third was of yew. Theſe were granted to ſuch perſons to whom were decreed an ovation, which was a ſort of triumph.

The fourth was of laurel. This was alſo very honourable. The triumphers wore it on the day of their triumph, or had it ſuſpended over their heads by a ſlave, who was behind them on the triumphal carr. Thoſe alſo who had had the honour of a triumph, wore it upon ſolemn occaſions, and at publick aſſemblies. And, as Suetonius informs us of all the honours the ſenate and people decreed to Julius Cæſar, he accepted none of them with ſo much pleaſure as the privilege of always wearing a crown of laurel.

The

was more proud of, than if he had gained as many victories over the greateſt enemies of the republick.

Theſe

The fifth was olive, and was for ſuch as had occaſioned a victory, tho' they were not preſent at the battle.

The ſixth was of ivy, which was conſecrated to Bacchus the inventor of triumphs.

The ſeventh was made of palm leaves, knotted at intervals with different coloured ribbons; it was made uſe of at triumphs. It was alſo given to thoſe who excelled in pleading, who uſed to place them on the ſtatue of Marſyas, as we have already obſerved. Docto Oratori Palma danda eſt, ſays Cicero.

The eighth was of myrtle, of which were made the civick crowns, and thoſe, which were given to poets who compoſed amorous verſes.

The ninth was of parſley.

The tenth was a ſort of garland twiſted about with woollen bands. Theſe were the reward of ſuch gladiators as had conquered their antagoniſt ſix times; they had alſo their liberty given them.

The poet Statius, who flouriſhed in Domitian's time, won three crowns in one day.

Theſe crowns of honour, are not however to be confounded with thoſe which the Roman people wore on days of rejoycing at triumphs, or upon other remarkable occaſions, for tho' theſe were often of laurel like the triumphal crowns, yet there was a difference between them. The people often wore them of ivy, roſes, and other flowers.

It will not be deviating much from our purpoſe, to take notice, that the crowns which were granted for ſome military exploit, had names proper to diſtinguiſh for what ſort of performance they were granted. The principal were the obſidional crowns. Theſe were given to ſuch as delivered a beſieged town or camp, and were the moſt honourable, tho' made only of the gramen aforemention'd, gather'd upon the ſpot where the action happened.

The

Theſe unworth occupations did not ſtop the courſe of his cruelties and lewdneſs, for he never quitted them but in order to ſpill the blood of ſome citizen, or diſhonour ſome illuſtrious family. He filled up the meaſure of his iniquity at laſt, and there was no way of reckoning up his crimes but by the number of his actions. So tyrannical a government cauſed the provinces to revolt, and determined them to ſhake off the intolerable yoke. Vindex, governor of Celtick Gaul, was the firſt that declared againſt Nero. Galba, who commanded an army in Spain, and Otho, governor of Luſitania, did the ſame, and their example was followed by the people of Rome, who were

The mural crown was given to him that firſt mounted the wall of a town taken by aſſault, it was garniſhed about with little battlements.

The civique crown was the recompence of thoſe, who in battle, ſaved the life of a citizen, by putting the enemy to flight; it was made of oak branches.

The triumphal crown was at firſt made of laurel, but afterwards of gold; thoſe, to whom the honour of a triumph was decreed, were adorned with it.

The naval crown, was the diſtinguiſhing mark of ſuch as entered firſt on board the enemy's ſhip in a ſea fight.

The crowns reſembling the prow of a galley, [Roſtrata Corona] were given to thoſe who had gained a victory at ſea, the ſame that was decreed to Agrippa after the battle of Actium.

The caſtrenſian crown [Caſtrenſis] was granted to ſuch as had the courage to throw themſelves the firſt into the enemy's port; it had the figure of a rampart or Palliſade.

The valarian crown was given to him who entered the firſt into the enemy's camp. It has been already obſerved, that beſides this, there was an olive crown for thoſe who, tho' they were not in the action, had nevertheleſs found means to gain the victory.

were reſolved to withdraw their allegiance from a prince that had made himſelf odious to all the earth. Galba was proclaimed emperor by the legions, and this election was confirmed by a decree of the ſenate, who declared Nero an enemy to the republick, and condemned him to death. He was informed that there was a moſt painful and ignominious one preparing for him; and ſeeing himſelf hated by all the world, betrayed by his ſubjects, and finding no compaſſion from any body, not even in the hearts of thoſe who had been partakers with him in his crimes, he killed himſelf, that he might not fall into the hands of thoſe who were in queſt of him, to ſacrifice him to the publick hatred, and before he gave the fatal ſtroke, he cried out, what pity it is that ſo ſkilful a muſician ſhould periſh in ſuch a miſerable manner.

Nero was at dinner when the news of the revolt of the armies was brought him. He tore the letters to pieces, overſet the table, and broke two Corinthian vaſes of immenſe value, which he called Homericks, becauſe of the verſes in Homer which

[f] Nero hearing that the ſenate had declared him an enemy to the republick, and condemned him to be puniſhed, according to the ancient form, [more majorum] aſked what was meant by the ancient form, and being told that the criminal was to be ſtripped quite naked, his head placed between the two grains of a pitch-fork, and whipped till he expired; afterwards he was to be thrown down the tarpeian rock, and then dragged with a hook and thrown into the Tiber. This made him tremble, and one of thoſe that were with him having adviſed him to prevent all theſe indignities to which his body would be expoſed, by courageouſly putting an end to his own life; Nero anſwered that he ſhould be extremely obliged to him if he would ſhew him the way.

which were engraven upon them. Then incloſing in a golden box, ſome poiſon which was prepared by Locuſta, he went to the Servilian gardens, from whence he diſpatched ſome of his moſt faithful freedmen to Oſtia to ſecure a ſhip, with orders to have it always in readineſs. He endeavoured to perſuade the tribunes and captains of his guards to accompany him in his intended flight, but ſome made ſcruples and difficulties, and others abſolutely refuſed him.

He formed a great many deſigns, without being able to come to any reſolution, heſitating whether he ſhould take refuge among the Parthians, or throw himſelf upon the mercy of Galba by appearing before him as a ſupplicant. Some times he thought it would be beſt that he ſhould ſhew himſelf in publick at the tribunal of Harangues, in deep mourning, in order to excite the compaſſion of the people, of whom he intended to aſk pardon for all his paſt faults; and if he ſhould find it impoſſible to obtain forgiveneſs, to requeſt that at leaſt, they might leave him the government of Egypt. In effect, there was afterwards found among his papers, a ſpeech that he had compoſed for that purpoſe; but it is thought that his fear of being torn to pieces by the mob, prevented his taking that method. However it was, he reſolved to defer his further deliberations till the next morning, and the mean time went to bed, but awoke about midnight, and perceiving that his guards had quit their poſts, he got up immediately, and ſent ſome of his friends for intelligence, but not hearing from any body, he went out into the ſtreets, attended by a few perſons, and knocked at ſeveral doors; but finding every where, a profound ſilence, he returned to his chamber, where ſome body had been in his abſence, and had carried off his bed-

cloaths,

cloaths, and the golden box that had the poiſon in it.

In this wretched condition he ſent about for Spicillus, or ſome other gladiator, to put him to death, for he could meet with no body that would do him this laſt piece of ſervice. "What "then, (ſaid he) have I neither friend nor "enemy?" and then ran as if he was determined to throw himſelf into the Tiber.

But changing his mind, he looked about for ſome ſecret place to hide himſelf in, till he could conſider a little, what was beſt to be done. Upon which one of his freedmen, named Phaon, offered him a little houſe he had four miles from Rome; ſo (bare foot as he was, having nothing on but his ſhirt and an old ragged cloak, that ſome body had thrown over him, with which he covered his head) he held a hankerchief up to his face, and mounted a horſe, accompanied only by four perſons of which number his beloved Sporus was one.

He was ſcarce ſet out when he felt the earth trembling under him, and was horribly terrified with dreadful flaſhes of lightning. As he paſſed near the camp, he heard the ſoldiers curſing him with bitter imprecations, and wiſhing proſperity to Galba. He met ſome perſons on the road, who ſaid to each other, theſe people are purſuing Nero. And one aſked him, what news of Nero at Rome? his horſe ſtarting at the ſame time, his face was uncovered with the ſhock, and he was known by one of the Prætorians, who ſaluted him. Coming to a narrow bye way, they were forced to quit their horſes among buſhes and briars, with which Nero's feet were much wounded, notwithſtanding the cloaths that they had lapped about them, and with great difficulty got at laſt to a wall that was juſt over againſt the

houſe. They had not however an opportunity of entering it ſecretly, ſo that Phaon adviſed him to conceal himſelf for a while, in a cavern where gravel had been dug; but Nero ſaid that he would not be buried alive; and being very thirſty, he was forced to take ſome water out of a ditch with his hand. He then ſat down, and fell to pulling the thorns out of his cloak, which was all in tatters with them, and was afterwards obliged to creep upon all four like a beaſt, through a narrow hole in the wall, which they had made on purpoſe. As ſoon as he had got into a little room, he threw himſelf upon a bed, where there was nothing but an old blanket and a wretched boulſter; and being very hungry and dry, they brought him a piece of black bread, but he would not eat of it, ſo was content with a draught of warm water.

All thoſe that were preſent ſolicited him to prevent, by a voluntary death, the evils and affronts with which he was threatned, ſo that he cauſed a grave to be made before his face, and ordered that it ſhould be covered with a piece of marble, if any could be procured. He alſo gave directions for water to waſh his corpſe, and wood to burn it. He wept at every word, with repeated lamentations, that ſo ſkilful a muſician ſhould ever die. In the mean time a courier arrived to give him notice, that the ſenate had declared him an enemy to the republick, and that he was condemned to die after the ancient manner. He enquired what ſort of puniſhment that was, and being told that the criminal was ſtripped naked, his neck faſtened to a poſt with the grains of a pitch-fork, and in this poſture, was whipped till he expired, he fell into a terrible horror; and, in order to avoid ſo dreadful a death, he reſolved to be his own executioner. He therefore took

two

two poiniards into his hand, but, after feeling the points of them, put them up again, ſaying, that his fatal hour was not yet come. Sometimes he would entreat Sporus to bewail and lament his miſerable fate, and then turning to all about him, would beg that ſome one of them would kill himſelf and ſhew him an example, for that otherwiſe he ſhould never have courage and reſolution enough. In the midſt of this perplexity, he heard the horſes feet of thoſe who were come to apprehend and conduct him to Rome. He then pronounced a greek verſe, the ſenſe of which is, 'a confuſed noiſe of horſes ſtrikes my ears,' and repeating theſe words, he took the poinard again, and attempted to kill himſelf; but havig neither ſtrength nor heart to do it, he was aſſiſted by Epaphroditus his maſter of requeſts.

The moment he received the mortal ſtroke, the captain entered the room, and pretending to have come to his aſſiſtance, endeavoured to ſtop the bleeding. But Nero, looking at him, ſaid, "it is too late: is this your fidelity?" In ſaying theſe words he expired, his eyes ſtarting out of his head in a moſt frightful manner.

He had recommended nothing ſo much to thoſe who were near him, as that his head ſhould not be given to any one, but that his body ſhould be burnt entire. Icelus, Galba's freedman, granted his requeſt, tho' he was but juſt come out of priſon, into which Nero had thrown him, as ſoon as the revolt was known ‡.

The delights of a court, and the charms of a throne, had made too powerful impreſſions upon Meſſalina's mind, not to inſpire her with ſtrong inclinations to reaſſume them. She even flattered herſelf with thoſe golden hopes; eſpeciallly when Otho (to whom ſhe had not been indifferent)

‡ Sueton.

indifferent) wrote her very tender letters, full of eſteem and affection. And it is certain, that he had reſolved to marry her, and waited for nothing but to bring his affairs to a concluſion, as to the deſigns he had upon the empire; but this haſty joy of Meſſalina did not laſt long, nor did fortune perform to this princeſs what ſhe had ſeemed to promiſe her; ſhe frequently raiſes people only in order to precipitate them ſo much the lower, and accordingly abandoned Otho, when he had the greateſt need of her; and, as if ſhe had repented her having exalted him to the throne after the death of Galba, ſhe preſently hurled him down again; or rather, providence would not permit that Otho ſhould long remain quiet poſſeſſor of that throne, which he acquired by a horrible murder; as if it were to convince ambitious people, that nothing is leſs durable than an uſurped power, and that the diadem is upon a very precarious foundation, when placed upon a guilty head. In effect, after Galba had been aſſaſſinated by Otho's treaſon, the empire became in a manner, a prey to whoever took a fancy to it. Vitellius was proclaimed emperor at Cologne, but Otho's party was the ſtrongeſt, becauſe he had the city of Rome on his ſide. He did not however make the moſt of his advantage, for inſtead of waiting for ſeveral legions that were coming to join him from Illyria, he went to meet Vitellius, and offered him battle; he was not even preſent himſelf at the action, which was the cauſe of his ruin, for his army not being encouraged by their chief, was entirely defeated; which as ſoon as Otho heard of, he killed himſelf through deſpair, that he might not ſurvive his misfortune; but left an affectionate letter for Meſſalina, in which he bid her adieu for ever.

The ſame ſtroke that put an end to Otho's life, deſtroyed Meſſalina's hopes. This princeſs's ambition might be ſaid to be quenched in Otho's blood; for, ſeeing all her projects brought to nothing, by the death of him, who ſhe imagined, would promote her again to the throne; ſhe gave herſelf entirely up to the ſtudy of eloquence, of which ſhe naturally poſſeſſed all the qualities, and gave ſufficient proofs of it by orations which ſhe ſpoke in publick. Theſe were ſo full of learning and erudition, that the moſt famous orators of her age might have been proud of them; and in this occupation ſhe paſſed the reſt of her life.

The End of the Firſt Volume.

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